

Technical and Bibliographic Notes / Notes techniques et bibliographiques

The Institute has attempted to obtain the best original copy available for filming. Features of this copy which may be bibliographically unique, which may alter any of the images in the reproduction, or which may significantly change the usual method of filming, are checked below.

L'Institut a microfilmé le meilleur exemplaire qu'il lui a été possible de se procurer. Les détails de cet exemplaire qui sont peut-être uniques du point de vue bibliographique, qui peuvent modifier une image reproduite, ou qui peuvent exiger une modification dans la méthode normale de filmage sont indiqués ci-dessous.

☒ Coloured covers/
Couverture de couleur

☐ Covers damaged/
Couverture endommagée

☐ Covers restored and/or laminated/
Couverture restaurée et/ou pelliculée

☐ Cover title missing/
Le titre de couverture manque

☐ Coloured maps/
Cartes géographiques en couleur

☒ Coloured ink (i.e. other than blue or black)/
Encre de couleur (i.e. autre que bleue ou noire)

☐ Coloured plates and/or illustrations/
Planches et/ou illustrations en couleur

☐ Bound with other material/
Relié avec d'autres documents

☐ Tight binding may cause shadows or distortion
along interior margin/
La reliure serrée peut causer de l'ombre ou de la
distorsion le long de la marge intérieure

☐ Blank leaves added during restoration may appear
within the text. Whenever possible, these have
been omitted from filming/
Il se peut que certaines pages blanches ajoutées
lors d'une restauration apparaissent dans le texte,
mais, lorsque cela était possible, ces pages n'ont
pas été filmées.

☐ Additional comments:/
Commentaires supplémentaires:

☐ Coloured pages/
Pages de couleur

☐ Pages damaged/
Pages endommagées

☐ Pages restored and/or laminated/
Pages restaurées et/ou pelliculées

☒ Pages discoloured, stained or foxed/
Pages décolorées, tachetées ou piquées

☐ Pages detached/
Pages détachées

☒ Showthrough/
Transparence

☐ Quality of print varies/
Qualité inégale de l'impression

☐ Continuous pagination/
Pagination continue

☐ Includes index(es)/
Comprend un (des) index

Title on header taken from:/
Le titre de l'en-tête provient:

☐ Title page of issue/
Page de titre de la livraison

☐ Caption of issue/
Titre de départ de la livraison

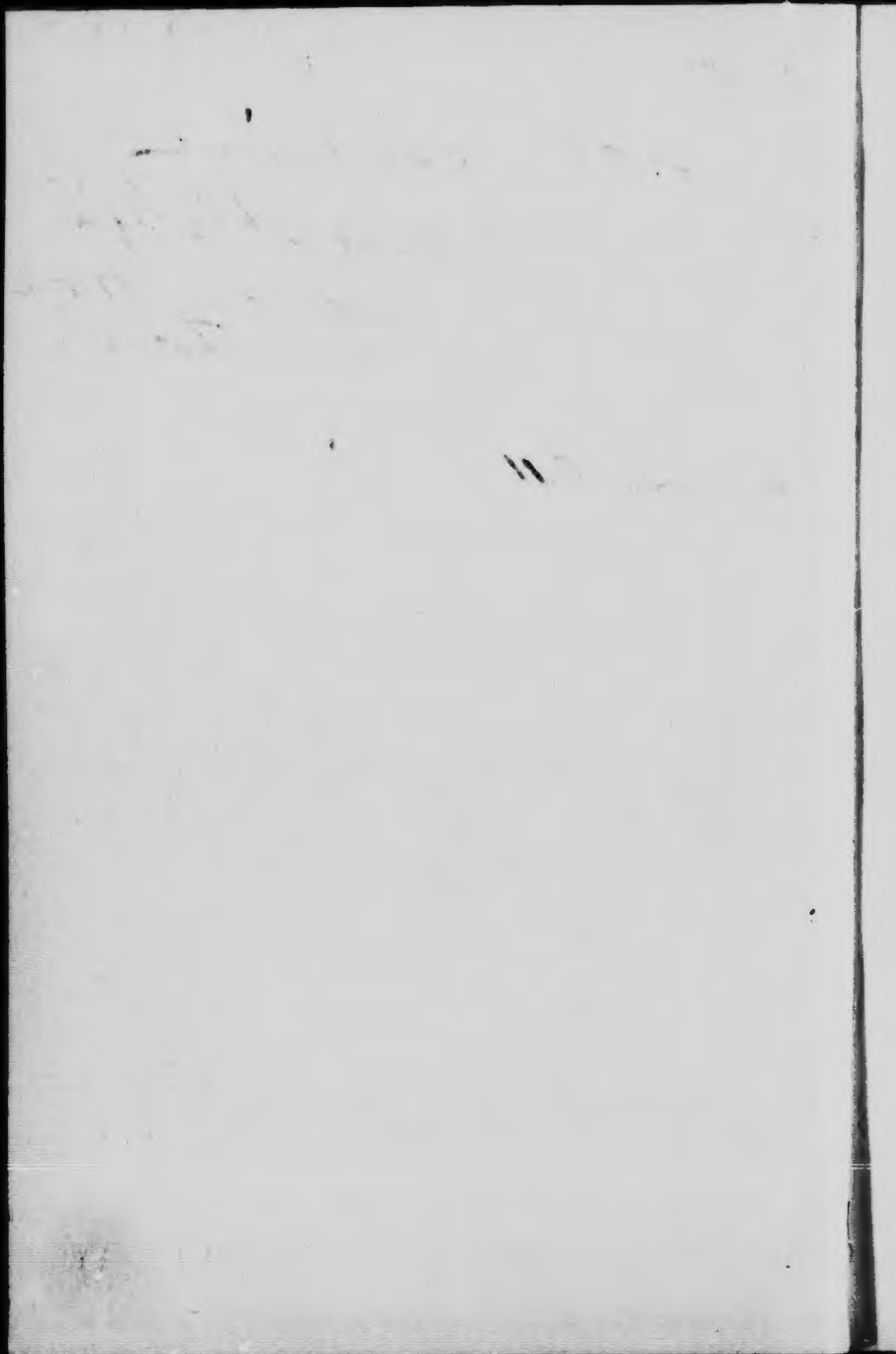
☐ Masthead/
Générique (périodiques) de la livraison

This item is filmed at the reduction ratio checked below/
Ce document est filmé au taux de réduction indiqué ci-dessous.

10X	14X	18X	22X	26X	30X
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12X	16X	20X	24X	28X	32X

To my dear friend
Margaret Blyth
with love from
the author's wife.

March 4th 1911



AFTER THE CATAclysm

A Romance of the Age to Come

BY

H. PERCY BLANCHARD



Cochrane Publishing Company
New York
1909

PS8503

L346

A37

1909

p***

Copyright, 1909,
BY
COCHRANE PUBLISHING Co.

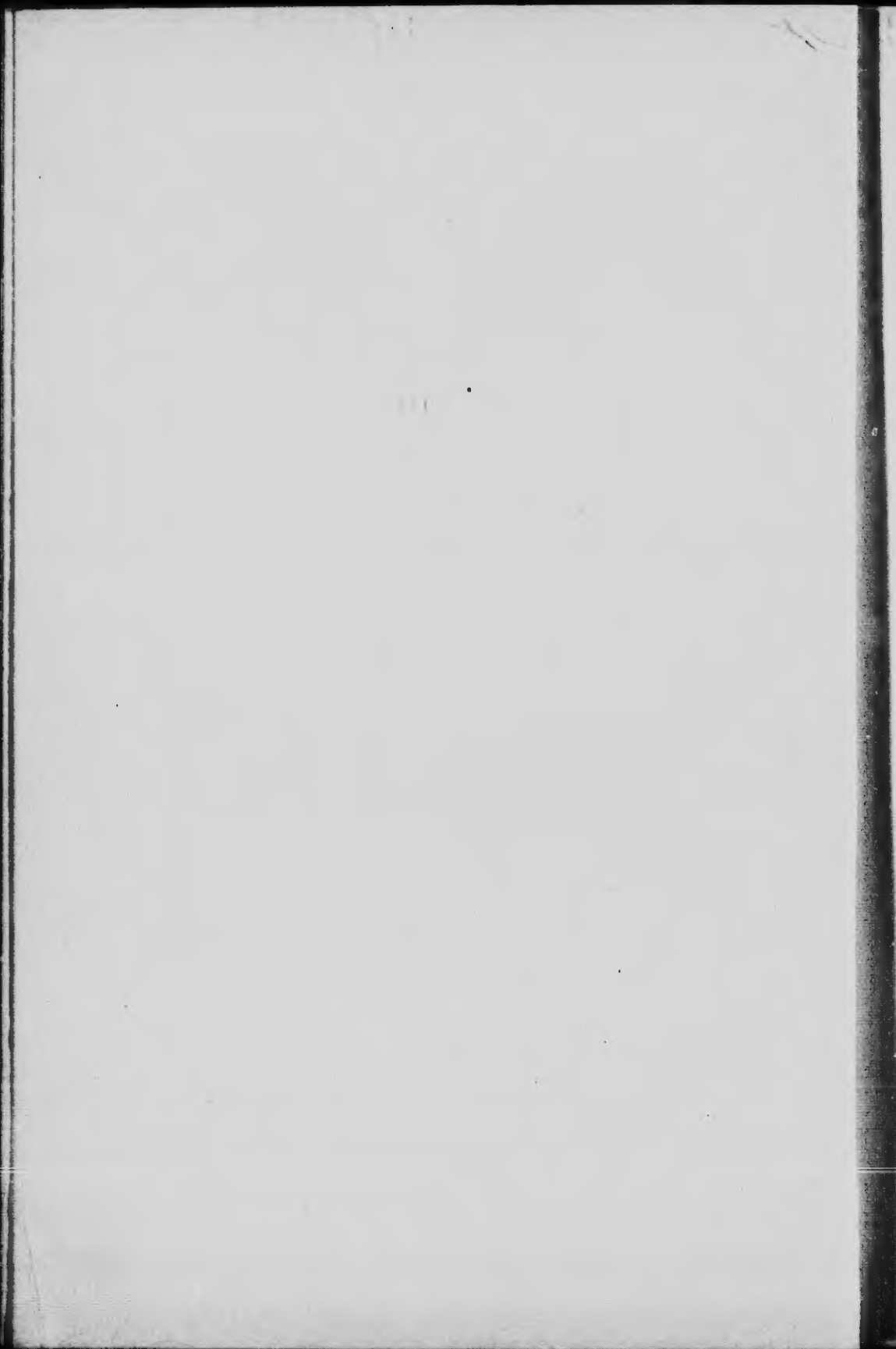
-09410403

Foreword

THIS story, all but the last two chapters, was written in the fall of the year 1900. The flying machine was a mere theory. Wireless telegraphy had just been invented by Marconi, but the idea of "tuning" it, had not been then hit upon. The Automobile was so much a toy in 1900 that its world-wide utilization in the near future had not impressed the public, nor yet its supersedure as a pleasure conveyance again in its turn by the Aeroplane.

So many of the things pictured in 1900 as still to come have, in the short eight years since, been realized; so many social and economic forces have been moving and inclining in the direction anticipated by this Story, the temptation has become irresistible to finish the same as at first intended and publish it.

THE WRITER.



AFTER THE CATAclysm

A ROMANCE OF THE AGE TO COME.

CHAPTER I.

It was about two o'clock in the morning.

For such a City as Rochester, the streets could well be called deserted.

The light top coat that I had thrown on to cover my dress suit was none too warm, though it was yet early in September of the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and one.

The swinging rhythm of a two-step that lingered on my memory, unconsciously kept beat with my own brisk stride as my thoughts pursued their unchecked wanderings amid the realms of vanity.

True, it was time that a bachelor of thirty-three should begin to take life somewhat seriously, and yet it was only that very evening that a bright-eyed maid of seventeen had told me that I would never fall in love with any girl till first my flute had jilted me. I recalled with an inward smile her answer, when I told her that my sweetheart always sang to me when I touched her lips to mine:—"Oh! then you must be engaged." Then I remembered that the dear child

AFTER THE CATACLYSM.

was just seventeen; which thought for some illogical reason provoked another smile.

But rudely enough were my pleasing reveries interrupted.

Suddenly, some three blocks down the street, the Station doors of the unsleeping fire brigade slammed open; and at the magic instant, out through the huge portals dashed the full armed chariots of the fire fighters.

"Fire! Fire!" the bursting horsehoofs yelled as the iron shod feet rang down the echoing pavement.

"Fire! Fire!" clanged eagerly the dingle of the engine's warning bell.

On sped the roaring fire-throated steamer and the rattling reels; on and away, as they galloped past me, and swirled in the glare of the electric light around a corner in the foreground.

Here and there windows opened; and, with that in-born curiosity to see a conflagration that all of us possess, I changed my rapid walk into a run, and hurried along in the wake of the engines.

It was apparent to me, as soon as I turned the corner, that serious business was in hand for some that night.

A crowd had already gathered. How, whence, and on whose alarm, remains a constantly recurring mystery; but the pavement was black with a dense throng of men, women, and even little children. Some, half clad, evidenced the hurry with which they had left their beds.

AFTER THE CATACLYSM.

As another steamer came galloping up, the assemblage opened, swallowed the glittering engine, then closed again.

All eyes were turned to a row of stone-fronted buildings, six or seven stories high, upon which the nozzles were pouring water. Out of the lower flat the grocery and retail stocks were being hurried, in face of the enemy already in possession. Three of the buildings were now a mass of flame, and it was a foregone conclusion that the corner store would ultimately go.

Wisely, most of the brigade were moving westward to out-flank destruction, leaving those in the fatal grasp to meet their doom.

The ladders had sought first this and then another window; and, as the firemen brought down the frightened inmates, one by one, the generous cheer betokened the crowd's appreciation. At last, presumably, all had been rescued, and the multitude relapsed into quietude to watch destruction work its will.

One building had already, amid an exploding fusillade of flame, collapsed; and its neighbor seemed soon to follow.

Then, rising high above the tumult of the conflagration, a roar that was not the voice of the fire fiend, swelled up from the horrified spectators.

Far up at the fifth story window of the corner building appeared the bloodless face of an old man of may-be eighty. His long white beard, his terror stricken eyes;—the multitude held their breath.

AFTER THE CATACLYSM.

In quick response to the confusing calls, a fireman came hurrying. Several times previously I had caught sight that evening of this same officer. A wide red scar from his left temple down his cheek caused me to recognize him at once. Earlier that night he had brought two children down from an upper window; the one a little lad perched fearlessly upon his shoulder "piggy-back," the other, a golden haired sister, wrapped under the fireman's strong arm. Then the man returned and helped down to safety the mother of the little ones.

Anxiously the crowd watched the fireman as without hesitation he lifted and hooked a light ladder to the ledge of a second floor window. Then up he went with another ladder strongly suspended by one hand over his head, and quickly caught the long hooks into the sill of the window above. Then, ladder by ladder, he built his way each story higher, until, to the applause of the people, the gallant fellow is at the upper window. Tongues of flame are already reaching out through the lower sashes and threaten the retreat.

The anxious spectators watch the dumb pantomime being enacted there above them. As his rescuer puts out a hand to assist across the precarious window ledge the old man, they see the latter shrink back in terror as he gazes at the depths below.

"Come!"

"I dare not!"

"Come, hurry!"

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

"No, not on that little ladder, it will not hold us."

"Come, I will carry you."

So the crowd interpret the move and gesture on that dizzy stage.

The old man looks behind him at the smoke already enveloping him, looks down into the street so far below, and shuddering draws back again.

The impatient fireman says something, and reaches out as if to seize and take the faithless old man by force; but the long white beard evades him and steps back, as crash! the burning floors give way, and a life goes out in the fire-unquenchable of that roaring abyss.

At the same instant, the attention of the horrified crowd is arrested by a nearer peril that threatens their own safety. Panic-stricken the closer ones surge back as they see the front wall, weakened by the collapsed interior, slowly sway and stagger, and, buckling at a little above mid-height, crumble and fall into the ruins, while the overhanging top and coping hurls itself resistlessly to the pavement below. The intervening network of electric wires are sent flying in every direction. That one of the arc light cables, spluttering its vicious fire at every fellow wire it touched, swished past my face and flashed upon me one unearthly blaze of deadly light, I know; of all thereafter, I know nothing.

CHAPTER II.

I HAVE thought, sometimes, that if the incidents of my, to say the least, unusual experiences were dramatized, what difficulties the play-wright would meet. With a great blank of thirty odd years in my life, it would tax his ingenuity to preserve the "unity of time," which, like the avoidance of consecutive fifths in harmony, is said to be one of the first principles of stage setting.

None the less, it behooves me to confine myself strictly to the truth, and let the coming Shakespeare grapple with the facts as he best can.

My returning consciousness found me stretched at full length upon my back, and covered completely, except as to my eyes, mouth and nostrils, with a few inches of damp clay.

Standing near by and looking down at me with kindly expression, were two persons seemingly much interested in what appeared to be an experiment, and in which I officiated as the unwitting subject.

"We were right in our conjectures," observed the elder, and then added, "Go, Vera, and bring me a mantle."

In a few minutes the woman addressed returned,

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

fetching a large woolen shawl or rug, and then, at a sign from the man who had first spoken, she retired.

The man stood watching me for a few minutes, placed his hand on my nostrils, and then as if satisfied, began slowly to remove the clay that covered me.

Having released me, he wrapped the rug about my nude thin body; and with a strength that surprised me, lifted me as one would a child, and gently carried me to a divan, pillowed beneath the shelter of what seemed a large summer-house or verandah.

I gave little thought to my surroundings. When the burden of clay lay on me, my cold body had neither inclination nor ability to breathe, but as a welcome warmth commenced to suffuse my numb muscles, my chest began to expand in response to the desire for air. At the beginning, the inspiration filled my lungs without much discomfort, but it was mainly from a want of sensation, for, as soon as the heat and vitality increased, each inhalation of even that luxuriously soft atmosphere gave me intense pain.

The man who had been watching over me put water to my lips and I drank eagerly of the refreshing fluid to appease my now burning thirst. I tried to thank him, but the unanswering muscles failed to produce a sound.

He brought and threw over me a second coverlet, and as my eyes followed his retreating form, my mind wandered off into the land of forgetfulness.

It was apparently noon-day when I awoke from a

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

sound and refreshing sleep. I felt like one who has come out of the long sleep that follows the crisis of a fever; weak, and yet strengthened; feeble, but all my faculties restored.

The girl, whom I had seen first in the garden, approached me as I moved and opened my eyes.

"I feared you would never awake."

"How long did I sleep?" for, to my delight, my voice rendered me now better obedience.

"Forty-eight or fifty hours."

"But where is this?"

She smilingly motioned as if such subjects were forbidden.

"There will be time enough to tell you all that, bye and bye. Wait, and I will bring you something to eat."

As she disappeared around a vine-covered trellis, her picture still lingered with me.

Vera, for I had remembered her name, was in stature fairly tall; straight, yet without that chilling dignity some are pleased to define as "stately." Her figure had just sufficient muscular development to give her an easy grace and conscious strength, not masculine or fleshy, but yet with no suggestion of feebleness or frailty. A delicate freshness of color lent to her complexion a tint of health, to which the vivacity of blue-gray eyes and smiling generous mouth gave willing verification. I had seen a few such rare faces and figures before, but there was a something of simplicity and yet of high intelligence

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

about her expression, that my mind confessed to me as new.

Her dress, though charmingly in harmony with its wearer, was slightly startling.

I recalled in a hazy way pieces of Grecian statuary I had seen. The material, a kind of jersey cloth of a silky fleeciness like finest wool, soft, and yet with substance, draped the undulating figure to the feet. The left arm was fairly covered, yet not encumbered, with the abundant cloth, but the right arm and shoulder were bare and free. In color, a creamy white, the tint of the robe made a gently pleasing contrast to the darker shade of her abundant hair.

But not very long did the subject of my meditation leave me to pursue my mental observations.

With an expression of mock solemnity upon her laughing mouth, she held her finger up impressively and delivered her message:

"My father says you are to have nothing to eat," and as she paused amused at the woeful effect her words produced upon my falling countenance, she added, "but that I may give you a little of this to drink," and, suiting the action to the word, she on one knee beside me, raised my head and held a tempting goblet to my lips.

As the welcome vitalizing fluid, of a body like a syrup, yet with a decidedly fruit-like flavor, reached my grateful throat, a peculiar smile that I could not repress prompted the girl to ask its reason.

It seemed so absurd, and yet that taste had carried

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

me back to my boyhood. The teacher's interrogation as to what was meant by the nectar of the Gods, recurred to me, and my perfectly earnest answer, that nectar was probably made from the juice of cherry preserves mixed with honey.

When I related the incident then to Vera, she soberly remarked, "Who knows, perhaps you were right."

When I all too soon drained the wax-like goblet, I noticed perhaps in grim contrast with the fair arm near me, that my own skin was still coated with scales of mud. The girl at the same time read my thought, and as if in apology said:

"Yes, you are muddy, but my father did not think it wise to disturb your rest. But now, if you think you can walk, we will try to see what a bath can do."

The under-robe still wrapped around me, was precarious covering. However, desperately clutching my garment, I managed with assistance to get upon my feet, and, with Vera's helping arm around me, staggered, rather than walked forward.

It seemed so like the opera *bouffé* travesty of some gutter-painted inebriate in the embrace of the gentle policeman, that I would not have been much surprised if next I met His Honor's greeting of: "Four dollars, or twenty days. Next!"

Passing along the stone-paved floor, and through some airy apartments, we came to a small room, stone-paved like the others, and with two little baths or square cisterns cut in the floor. The water entered

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

at the left into the first recess, then into the second pool, and then disappeared.

It was a charming little place, more like a natural grotto than a work of art. Large uncut stones piled on each other, formed the walls, and in the interstices, vines and flowers grew unrestrained. A rustic, but yet weather-proof roof, closed out the sky.

Vera seemed amused at my dismayed survey of the clinging clay that festooned my bony arms, and as she went out, she turned to caution me not to stand still too long, or I might begin to throw out roots and grow.

It did not take me long to give the second pool a color like my own. Then on my transfer to the upper bath, I managed finally, after much prospecting, to pre-empt myself. It was only a slight exertion; yet, tired but clean, it was a pleasure to sit down on the basin edge to rest.

Just as I had gone through the process of an "atmospheric dry," I heard Vera's light step approaching. The door opened. Then around its corner the hand and arm of the undisclosed owner appeared; and, with a quick throw, a clean soft robe dropped to the floor beside me, and again the door closed.

It was a matter of some study to me to decide how to put the thing on.

As I held it up, the garment seemed to be made of a large square of goods, folded cornerwise. The diagonal was about a yard longer than my height. The matched edges on one side were sewn together to

AFTER THE CATAclysm

about three feet from the folded corner; and, near where the seam stopped, an opening had been cut. After several trials and experiments with rather unsatisfactory results, I found that, with my head and right arm and shoulder through the opening mentioned, and the seam to the front, the top extension or point fell naturally to the left and made a full yet unconfining sleeve for the left arm, while the right shoulder and arm remained bare. In front, the seam extended to a little above the knee, but the voluminous drapery somewhat enfolded the feet and reached to the ground behind.

The effect, I had to admit, was evidently classical; but then, it was all I had. In any event it seemed to be in style, and so, well, what else mattered?

I sauntered out in my bare feet with as much jauntiness as a decided stiffness permitted; but feeling, in spite of my bravado, painfully conscious of my shortcomings.

Vera and her father were waiting for me on the verandah.

"Oh," she said, "I forgot until you were in your bath that I had omitted your sandals, and then, I thought you would not care for me to bring them in."

Thereupon, not without some protest on my part, she sat down at my feet, and deftly tied on what she had so properly designated as sandals.

Mr. White, for such I learned his name to be, enquired as to my strength and appetite, and, much to my satisfaction, suggested that I might be able to digest solids, and offered me some fine bananas.

AFTER THE CATAclySM

Except for the skin, which was velvet-like, and lacked the, to me, characteristic glassiness, the fruit had all the familiar flavor and appearance; and when Mr. White asked me if I recognized it, I quoted in the classic Italian of the festive Dago:

"He-le-a. He-le-a, le lipe pin Bananio."

It need not be denied that I was very curious to learn my position and surroundings; but to all my questionings, both Mr. White and Vera smiled a polite refusal, though with the implied promise of a bye and bye.

CHAPTER III.

A WEEK of sleep and quiet lounging, interspersed with meals and happy chatter, that seemed to do me equal good, passed by.

The delightful spring-like air, the steady sunny weather, with only heavy mid-night dew to give the needed moisture, sent into my bones new energy and vigor.

"You have been wondering, as I would judge by your so far unanswered questions, what is the explanation of your peculiar position? That it is peculiar, cannot be denied."

I nodded, but my silence spoke the eagerness with which I looked for the answer. Mr. White without waiting proceeded:

"You may be surprised to know that this is the month of January in the year of Our Lord (as perhaps you were accustomed to designate it) nineteen hundred and thirty-four. I do not know what the date was when you ceased consciousness."

"Nineteen hundred and one."

"Yes, I supposed about then. Last week when my daughter was working in her garden, the earth suddenly subsided under her feet, making a hollow on the surface that at once arrested our attention. It

AFTER THE CATAclysm

was more a matter of curiosity than any expectation of advantage that prompted me to investigate. At my daughter's earnest solicitation (here Vera nodded at me her corroboration) I dug away the earth. About a foot below the surface, we came upon some bits of rotten board; and to shorten the story, we found that the coffin in which you had seemingly been buried, had, except where the glass over the face had partly preserved the wood, so decayed as to let the earth fall in upon your body.

"We were amazed to find that although the clothing had rotted and disappeared, your body was in perfect preservation. There was no respiration. Was it life, —or death? Yet if the first,—how was consciousness to be restored?

"To the mystery, the innumerable reddish blue spots on your face, which still give you probably some discomfort, suggested a solution. In any event the experiment was worth trying. On the presumption that you had been shocked by a heavy discharge of mechanical electricity—"

"Yes, it was from a broken arc light wire, I expect."

"Exactly. On that presumption we knew that, provided the nerve system had not been actually burned out, the reception by the body of a heavy electric discharge would induce unconsciousness, to continue until the magnetic influences of the fluid were withdrawn. At the same time, a suspension of all motion, including an arrest of disintegration, would be created; in that every organic atom would be held in magnetic

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

tension so long as the corporeal battery continued charged. It remained to so withdraw the influence gradually that the tissues would naturally rebound and assume their normal muscular pulsations in reaction from the molecular rigidity. Acting upon this reasoning, it was but the work of a few minutes to loosen some surface clay, place your body on it, and except for your nostrils, cover you with a few inches of damp earth. This treatment, in many instances when people were injured in using the unrefined fluid, has succeeded.

"You will comprehend that, although you had been under ground many years, not until the coffin had broken and the soil caved in on you that day, had the clay come in direct contact with your body, and direct actual contact is essential. If, when the earth fell in, no action had been taken, the electricity holding your vitality in suspension would soon have been dissipated, and then, without recovering consciousness, you would have been repulsated, next, suffocated, and finally in the fullest sense dead, upon which, of course, putrefaction would undoubtedly have ensued.

"For about twenty-four hours, though keeping a close watch over you, we left you in your damp clay application, and were at last rewarded by your regaining consciousness, and becoming as you now are, our very welcome guest. Perhaps I have told you as much at present as your nascent mind can easily digest."

Mr. White stopped, and although my curiosity was

AFTER THE CATAclysm

far from satisfied, I restrained with some effort further questionings. But I could not resist asking if, where we were, was not the outskirts of Rochester.

"Yes, it is plainly apparent that our garden covers part of what was the Suburban Cemetery of that city. Out there is probably the very spot where you were originally interred, unless—but never mind, we will discuss that again."

CHAPTER IV.

It must not be forgotten, that, although I had now enjoyed about ten days of reconsciousness, I had never been outside the small shrub enclosed garden of my host. I may in justice confess, that a great part of my time, even of the day, was spent in sleep; but, in defence of this laziness, it can be urged that this unbecoming excess of slumber was to be attributed to the medicinal properties of my nourishment.

This morning, as I was lazily lounging in the pleasant sunshine, Vera, holding in one hand her little trowel, beckoned to me with it to come with her, a summons I was not inclined to disobey.

"Come," she said, "I want some startling excitement, I want to see you work."

Following her guidance, we soon reached that part of the small domain she called, in contradistinction to the general property, her own garden.

Truly, it was a pretty place. The surrounding shrubbery was so planted as to avoid the suggestion that it was a boundary, but rather, with its encroaching promontories, its little bays and nooks and disappearing pathways, it gave the impression of a gateless Eden. In reality, the actually cultivated soil, exclusive of the trees and clumps of bushes, would not

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

exceed in area the ground-floor of a large sized mansion.

Except for a mass of brilliant bloom on a high sloping bank in the left foreground, nothing at all corresponded to the type of landscape gardening with which I was familiar.

The delicate beauty of the picture was in part secured by a certain ruggedness of groundwork and a subdued brown of rock and leaf which formed the undertint, over which was draped and contrasted daintiest palms and ferns and creepers, offset again with powerful begonia-like foliage and strong color.

The garden as a whole, was conceived as a painter would design a picture,—to be viewed to best advantage from a certain standpoint and in a certain light. But in the comparison, this little paradise had much the superiority, in that, not from one point of view, but from some twenty different spots, the alternating situations unfolded each its own surpassing panorama.

I must admit an unpoetical temperament and an inclination to look at things from what we are pleased to call the practical. That the cobweb on an angel's statue may hide from us the entrancing loveliness of the marble is sad to contemplate, yet if we are so constituted, what else can we do? This explanation is but precedent to my further admission that, as I lingered admiring this charming retreat, the thought of the immense labor of weeding such a place suggested itself to my mind. When, in such contemplation, Vera told me that half an hour a day was all the

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

time she found necessary to spend upon her garden, and further, that no other hand but hers had touched a plant or leaf, I naturally asked: "But how do you keep down the weeds?"

"Weeds? We make no distinction between one class of plant and another."

"Then you grow weeds and all?"

"Yes."

"But don't the weeds spread and pass beyond your control?"

"No. But I see what you mean. I remember the books tell us that in your time certain plants had seeds to which were attached little downy wings or some such adjuncts that carried the seeds very often great distances. Nearly all of these plants were what you call weeds, and I can easily imagine the trouble one would have in following these airy atoms flying with the breeze. Now, we have no seeds so grown. We have the plants, but their seeds are as if the little wing had been clipped off, and when the seed ripens it falls to the ground at the foot of the plant. In consequence, we are not troubled with that redundant fecundity of which you complained.

"Why this present difference I cannot explain. Possibly it is only a reversion to primitive nature. It may be that when the globe's surface began to cool, and the luxuriant vegetation of the coal formation period thereupon experienced, in the increasing chill of winter, a more serious struggle for existence, the latent faculties of the seed therein originally implanted

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

by the Creator were called into action, and these downy attachments and such added auxiliaries took form; and so the plant in the presence of increasing natural difficulties may have developed these heretofore dormant aids to propagate and multiply.

"Now with our equable temperature, and a climate comfortably warm the whole year round, the necessity which in your time existed has ceased; and so with the necessity has ceased those expanded faculties which that necessity demanded.

"A native of the Tropics carried quickly to the Arctic regions would by his innate reason be impelled, for his own comfort and preservation, to cover himself with warm clothing, which again he would remove upon his return to his southern home. The lower animals, insects and even vegetable growths will often, by a slow process, change and assume another color or even contour, as a protection to their existence. This not by intelligent reason, but by an inherent propensity inferior even to instinct. How can we deny that the Creator in giving life and a means of propagating life to the humblest plant creation, could not therewith give, (just as in more generous measure He gave to man himself), a latent ability to that plant to adapt itself in preservation of its species to a changing environment.

"It may be true that, with the cultivation of the ground, man found this seed fecundity, so necessary in the wilderness, superabundant and a menace and burden to him. But while a continuous warfare with

AFTER THE CATAclysm

nature was entailed, which showed man in his conflict out of harmony with the creation, these provisions superabundant in his eyes, may yet have been necessary to the plant in its struggle, not with man in his plowed field, but with wild nature for the preservation of its existence. With nature now a less formidable antagonist, the seed has laid down some of its habilaments of war."

Stopping to admire a flower, or passing to where some new and charming vista unfolded itself, we unconsciously had come, at the extremity of one of those winding bays which I have mentioned, to a mound of newly dug earth.

Vera turned away as if to draw me elsewhere, but the very action confirmed in my mind the surmise that this was the scene of my first introduction to this hospitable family. Yet, the memory of the event still carried with it a certain uncanny repugnance to the place, a feeling Vera seemed to share. At the same time, this suggestion of my past projected before me the question of my future. What my next move would be, where I would go, now that my health and strength had fully returned, pressed with a puzzling interrogation upon me. I frankly mentioned to Vera my perplexity.

"But you must remember that it is not for you to decide; you belong now to me."

"How so?"

"You will not deny that yonder hole and mound of earth are in my garden—my very own garden?"

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

"No; that is admitted."

"According to the fundamental rules that now govern title, or private ownership, the right or property and possession exists in whatever is made by the labor of our hands or raised by us from the ground by our own exertions."

"But then," I objected, "you merely dug me up upon my first disclosing myself to you, at my own instance, by means of my earth subsidence. It was as if you had released a prisoner confined in a house you had acquired after his incarceration."

"Oh, no. Had you been a mine discovered, a mineral dug up, you would belong to the Community, subject to a recompense for the exertion expended in prospecting for you. Had you been a shrub growing in the unkept field or forest, you would belong entirely to the Community; but, should any one transplant you, as he would have full right, you would belong, upon being replanted in his private garden to the one who appropriated or potted you."

"Then as a human mineral, I belong to the Community."

"Have you forgotten that when you, as you claim, discovered yourself, my father at my instance dug you up, and that then we replanted you under a gentler covering of clay, a little distance from your first location?"

"You will understand that the original putting you in the earth long ago in your so-called burial, constituted a virtual abandonment of you, not only by your-

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

self, but also by your community. You will also notice that under the boasted laws of the nineteenth century the thirty years in which the soil of my garden had you in possession, adverse to yourself, lost you under your twenty-year statute of limitations any claim to yourself, even upon the stretched presumption that your person had ceased to become personal property and had become real estate. You will not deny that the soil held adverse possession of you, in that, during the tenure, you could enjoy no use or service of yourself, and it was only with the consent of the soil, and even by its actual aid in demagnetizing you, that you came to yourself.

"You are aware, of course, that accretions to the land ultimately revert to the final owner, and so we might conclude, that as I am the owner, I take with the soil also the appurtenances. This should give me title under your own law. But even under ours, you remember as I have already stated, that I dug you up, and transplanted you to another place. That establishes appropriation which gives us now a full claim, especially after a previous abandonment. Perhaps you are unaware that, after replanting you, as the earth covering of my new found orchid lost its moisture, I watered you and tended you as I would a transplanted flower. Then, when you grew and blossomed into life and vigor, and I plucked my anemone and have you here beside me now full blown, am I not right in saying:—you are mine?"

The assumed seriousness of her expression as she

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

finished her unanswerable argument melted away at sight of my blank lack of comprehension, and, as a sympathetic smile enfolded her face, in more than pardon and atonement for the perplexity she had so wilfully caused me, she gently threw her arm about my neck and playfully kissed my cheek.

CHAPTER V.

It was a Monday afternoon.

The sun in the clear western sky showed four or five o'clock.

Mr. White and I had, with our outward eye, each intent upon his own unspoken thoughts, been following the birds as they flitted from twig to twig, or gazing may be far away into the fleecy clouds that slowly pursued their course in the azure expanse above. At last Mr. White broke in upon the silence of our reflections.

"I suppose, my friend, that you have found many things that seem somewhat out of the order of your previous existence?"

I explained my great difficulty to be, that although so short a period as only thirty years had elapsed, it was hard for me to identify anything of the present in any way as a projection or elaboration of the civilization of my own times; in fact, it seemed to me more like a beautiful past than even an Arcadian future.

"Yes, I agree with you, there is some foundation for your impression, how much you yourself will be able to judge, when I fill in a few historical incidents in the blanks of your unconscious existence.

"When your faculties failed you, in the opening

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

year of this twentieth century, certain nebulous phantoms long threatening the social stability of the world, began to materialize. Protective tariffs but hastened the inevitable. The hand looms and small individual work-shops of your fathers had given place to the Limited Liability Companies, which in turn by combination or assimilation had unified their interests under more wide-spread corporate control.

"To fight these Trusts, laws were enacted to prevent co-related establishments from pooling their profits or adopting interpreferential rates or tariffs. The unlooked for but not illogical result was, that two or three superlatively wealthy financial magnates joined hands and literally brought out a controlling interest in all the main producing enterprises of the civilized world. Once the smaller corporations had aggregated the scattered crumbs of industry, it did not take long for the *Great Syndicate* to devour the agglomerate mass. For a time the people were aghast at the position and threatening possibilities. Trained for long centuries to servile submission to the laws, they found themselves tied hand and foot by the very statutes under which they had so evidently been plundered.

"Nationalization became the popular cry. Had it been adopted years before, and an efficient training in self-management inculcated into the people, this might have afforded a remedy. Unfortunately, a cause is oftener judged by its promoters than by its merits. The emptiest absurdity draped in the dust-dimmed

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

mantle of a reverent antiquity will masquerade for generations as profoundest wisdom, if vouched for by a venerable defender.

"So, too, when socialists and cranks at strife with things that be, by chance held by its hottest end some burning truth, waving its blazing beacon light above the pirate flag of anarchy; timid and ignorant humanity looked fearfully at these unbalanced sponsors for the truth, and in their fright denounced the truth as lies. Not that the world were wise to follow the blatant ravings of the demagogue, but only that the diamond in the gutter is a diamond still.

"When thoughtful but influential voices urged radical measures to crush or even hold in check the Trusts; those in the Legislature, still clinging to their shreds of vanishing authority, opposed the step. It would be spoliation, it would be robbery to expropriate the national heritage without compensation, and as the Syndicate already owned all, the people had nothing with which to repurchase their birthright.

"Many good men, actuated doubtless by the best and most honorable of motives, argued from the altruistic level. These were seconded by the ablest intellects that could be subsidized by the Syndicate.

"The common people, denied the comfort and support which the active or even passive sympathies of their statesmen and men of literature might have afforded, became desperate, morose and bitter. To be told that they were but fleeing from the shadowy phantasmagoria of a redundantly fertile imagination was

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

small assistance. They looked for relief, not rhetoric.

" True, the majority still had work in the Syndicate factories, and starvation had not yet met them face to face. But the menace of a threatening fact was there; and labor without liberty of choice was slavery.

" This state of affairs was not confined to the Continent of America. All Christendom was in the grasp of the Syndicate. This statement, though, is subject to curtailment. The power of the Syndicate was mainly commercial and financial.

" The European governments, so far as their military and agrarian predominance surmounted the economic, preserved much of their former influence.

" Pressed for money, the smaller States such as Spain, Portugal, Greece and even Italy, sold out for cash such unattached provinces and islands as were not of vital importance to them, parting with even the sovereignty therein, and at the same time bestowing a Princedom upon the multi-millionaire who was the purchaser.

" Turkey, much to the chagrin of Russia, had traded off to some Jewish bankers the whole of Palestine for enough money with which to surround Constantinople with a few ironclads, and, under the treaty protection of Great Britain and Germany, an Israelitish Republic was taking form and substance in the Holy Land.

" One of those comparatively small events in history, namely the British-Boer war, about the last year of the nineteenth century had, to a disproportionately greater extent than its importance would

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

suggest, affected the military systems of the world. Its teaching was to arm the whole population as civilians, not as soldiers. The nations wise in their generation, quickly put the lesson into practice, and soon their vast standing armies, like huge billows towering over all Europe, subsided into the great sullen sea of labor, only to add to the plethora of industrial production. The human engines of war were not destroyed; they were only dismounted.

"Each group of artisans in Europe and America was in disguise, a squad of soldiers. The sergeant and subaltern were fellow workers at the bench. Only the National Guards required to hold the cowering populace in check, and the absolutely necessary regimental units retained their uniforms. So thoroughly were the plans laid out, that, on a trial mobilization, at headquarters, an electric button pressed, and six million Germans, ere the second sun had set, stood fully armed and accoutred to defend the Fatherland. So, too, in the United States, in Canada, in Mexico, each able-bodied man within twelve hours could reach his rifle.

"With the same mathematical precision, taught by the same masters, the different trades had each their unions, their centres, and their Federal and National Organization, with a Grand Council that formed a keystone uniting practically all the manual laborers in Christendom. So were affairs at the beginning of the second decade of this century.

"Surely the fuel was well arranged to invite the

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

conflagration. The carefully laid trains from magazine to magazine, were now complete. The explosion quickly followed.

"Off in the silver mines of far away Nevada, the little spark was struck. On that certain memorable day, a small dispute arose between a workman and his boss. The man in going from the mine to the dump had forgotten his shovel, or else expected to find one waiting for him. The boss, angered at the carelessness, threatened to dock his pay for the half hour's time lost in going after and getting the implement. An insolent reply provoked the man's instant discharge. The result was that the whole gang struck. To take their places, the owners brought in a new lot of men, mainly starving creatures and negroes who were not in any Union. To meet this, the engineers and hands on the spur that joined the mine with the trunk road all went off. In consequence, the owners closed down indefinitely both mine and branch line. In revenge, the crews on the trunk road struck, and when the concern endeavored to keep their traffic moving, the railway was boycotted and an embargo placed by the National Union on its coal supply.

"Naturally enough, one of the neighboring mines, for under the Syndicate all their interests were mutual, disregarded the embargo and sent in coal. Then followed a strike of the mines. Blame was not wholly on one side. The pride of ignorance opposed the pride of wealth. If avarice and power impelled the Syndicate to despotism, the selfish intolerance of the

AFTER THE CATAclysm

Unions even toward their fellows outside the Brotherhood, rendered the workmen tyrannical. They felt their power, they knew that upon equal terms they were resistless. The skill, the finesse, the dexterity of the intellects that fettered them they discerned. They were like giants smashing blindly with their club against a rapier. They were enmeshed with silk, not iron chains; and, as they felt the web now tightly spun about them, they hurled themselves with insolent defiance upon those whom they chose to call their oppressors. How often does selfish inconsideration bring strife, often calamity. A little coolness and reason might perhaps have made history otherwise, but that was not to be.

"For a time, both sides stood firm, but when hunger joined in alliance with the Syndicate, desperation urged desperate measures.

"After the mines struck, the owners endeavored to put in other laborers. The result was a riot. The few police failed to restore order, and the Syndicate made the fatal mistake of requisitioning the National Guard. The Government dimly foreseeing the danger, and yet powerless in the hands of the Syndicate, could not refuse.

"To evidence their sympathy with the local miners out, Headquarters gave the signal, and every Union miner in America laid down his pick. When the European producer began to relieve the pressure by shipping to the States the needed fuel, the *Brotherhood of Man* compelled the transatlantic miners to come to

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

the rescue, and they too struck. With the stoppage of the coal supply, factories had to close their doors.

"The crisis had come, and it was the Syndicate against the People.

"The Syndicate now determined, by the aid of negroes and large importations of Chinese under military guard, to open the mines of Pennsylvania. They sent two regiments of Nationals down to the collieries. The strikers showed violence. When the women and children pelted the soldiers with sods, the order was given to fire, and at the first volley a swath of starving humanity was mown down.

"'To the arsenals!' arose the cry; and, ere the authorities could intervene, fifty thousand rifles in the hands of the maddened miners rushed to wreak vengeance on the National Guards. In the conflict that followed, in which every man was trained to his weapon, no mercy was shown. The Nationals brought into antagonism to the people through many such jobs of terrorism, at the instance of the Syndicate, had become by this time as hated by the citizens as once were the mercenaries of the decaying Roman Empire.

"When the news of the battle at the collieries was flashed over the Continent and across to Europe, a panic ensued. The armories were plundered, ammunition seized, and each man armed himself as best he could. Barricades were thrown up, trenches and defences everywhere appeared, and all Christendom became a battle ground. Flundering for provisions the

AFTER THE CATAclysm

well-armed mobs attached the great Syndicate properties; and the National Guards, and such troops as obeyed the summons were thrown into the defence. The issue was not for long in doubt. The mercenaries were driven back, overpowered, and, when neither man, nor woman, nor child were spared, annihilated.

"As the people tasted blood, their thirst for blood increased. An awful fear, a sense that each man's hand was against his neighbor, a panic of terror compelled the stroke to anticipate the expected thrust. With the last semblance of authority vanished, lawlessness went mad. If here and there some few would counsel moderation, the demon of destruction dashed them down; lest, in a retributive justice once established, the murderous excesses should meet punishment. They had gone so far that no one dared turn back.

"At the first great call to arms, the farm and workshop both had been deserted. When approaching Autumn chilled the fevered blood, cold and starvation threatened. How the miseries of that winter were met and endured is not to be told. Robbery and arson filled up the quota famine lacked. Many a starving family would wake in the gray morning to find their little treasured fuel or food stolen while they slept. During that single year, a third of Europe and America perished from the bullet, or just as deadly cold and hunger.

"In the Spring, many with such of their families

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

as survived, fled to the forests and the wilderness. Here, planting such little seed crops as they could, they struggled through the summer, living on such wild berries and roots as nature provided. Yet, even here, marauders sought them out, and despoiled and often murdered them.

"During the first year of this widespread reign of terror, the only European country that had any fair measure of escape was Russia. Shut in from much communication with the rest of civilization, her population mainly on the soil, the virus did not thoroughly permeate the masses. Her army mobilized on the first warning of trouble, such of the people as showed restlessness were handled without mercy.

"In the first calm, after Winter had somewhat checked the raging madness, such as still had property began to count up their few remaining assets. Investments outside the great cyclonic circle were partially intact. The unprecedented exodus of Jews from Russia into Palestine withdrew from the former country much of its ready money. On the loss of all confidence in paper accommodation, the totally inadequate coinage threw gold up to an immense premium. The Palistinean Israelites began a wholesale foreclosure of the claims they still held on their many needy Russian debtors. So great was the aggravation and misery that overwhelmed the thriftless Muscovites, that at last they called for help and protection to their Government and nobility. The response was as ready as it was surprising. With a cry for vengeance on

AFTER THE CATAclysm

their spoilers, like ancient Egypt against Israel of old, the Czar himself in person at their head, put his obedient army into motion southward, with their faces turned toward Jerusalem.

"In their great peril, the Palestinian Republic appealed to its treaty protectors, Britain and Germany, for assistance. Germany refused; in fact it could not in its own helpless condition do otherwise. But England, though in sore straits, never faltered, and sprang to arms against her foe of a generation.

"A few infantry regiments hidden in South Africa and now on their homeward way were held at Suez. To join them, the whole British and native army in Egypt was collected at Alexandria. On such few transports as were obtainable, Indian troops were hurried forward. This small force was thrown at once into Palestine. Landing at Jaffa, the main column marched North, the fleet keeping abreast of them and protecting their left flank. A division was despatched inland to garrison Jerusalem.

"While the British forces were being collected and taking up the position outlined, the myriads of Russia had traversed Asia Minor and were crossing Syria. In the mountains of Carmel, the advance guards of the opposing forces met. As they marched southward, the host of Muscovites and Huns swung eastward, filling the broad plain of Esdraelon with their countless squadrons. The British held the mountains, and with their natural instinct put the sea behind them. There, in very open order, they awaited the approach-

AFTER THE CATAclySM

ing morning to begin the attack. In long parallel lines, running north and south, the two confronting armies laid down to rest and gather strength for the coming day of slaughter. To avoid as far as possible the shells that during the afternoon had been thrown at long range from the heavy Russian batteries, the British had placed their encampments on the west or sheltered slopes of the steep hillsides. In such array were the armies of Israel and the hosts of the Kings of the North at sunset of the twentieth of June, 1914. But I must now go back a little in my story. Perhaps though, I am wearing you?"

I assured him I was never more interested in my life, and on no account to stop.

Just then Vera came in with a tray of fruit and the conversation was interrupted.

CHAPTER VI.

MR. WHITE resumed his story.

"I must begin at the spring of 1914. As soon as winter loosened its grasp of the starving frozen populace, new rioting began. In the United States, the vestige that remained of the Grand Council of the Brotherhood met and appointed a committee of ten to assume the government of the Republic. The same organization in Britain when it learned of this move, assembled as many of its members as could be collected to discuss the question of similar action. A good deal of bitter debate ensued, some vehemently demanding republican institutions, others, with the sentiments of the old monarchy still lingering in their breasts, opposing.

"It had been a cruel year for royalty. Of Windsor Castle, only the old Norman Tower had escaped the vandalism of the mob. The King, with a few faithful friends lived, or rather, existed, in the shelter of the ruins. What vestiges of government remained within the Empire were only to be found in the far away provinces and minor colonies.

"In the midst of the stormy deliberations of the as-

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

sembled Brotherhood, to their astonishment a messenger entered with the statement that the King was at the door and requested admission.

"After a short but tempestuous debate, the request was granted. Up between the rows of delegates King Edward walked, emaciated and old before his time, but with a steady step.

"When he had reached the chair, he turned and spoke. In clear, brief sentences he pointed out to the assembly his position. He made no laws, he enforced no laws; that was the function of the people. He was but the centre of a circle, the Empire was bounded by the circumference. His dignity was all in the reflected glory of his Country. As it was exalted so was he, as it became base, so he became ignoble. Did they seek the welfare of the people, then he was their fellow; did they design the destruction of their brethren, he stood before them a victim ready as the willing sacrifice. In Britain, to destroy the Crown was to destroy the last vestige and emblem of authority. So far as he could see, the people were without representatives. The nearest approach to a representative body was the assembly before him. He recognized that fact, and, as their King, he had taken them into his councils. Was he right?

"Amid a vociferous applause and cries of 'Long live the King,' he proceeded. Under the authority in him vested, he called and created the assemblage there present before him his Parliament of Great Britain. In their hands he now deposited the welfare and the

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

responsibility for the security of their common country.

"As he turned to depart he stopped and added further, that when, after these disturbances ceased, it pleased the people of Great Britain to elect a Parliament by vote, he would dissolve the present assembly, and furthermore if it was the will of the people of his Empire to demand from him the Crown, he would comply, but otherwise he would keep his trust inviolate till death.

"Turning again, he gravely saluted the chair and departed.

"In Europe, the thrones of all but Russia had been swept away in blood, and blind anarchy was in high power. Murder and robbery were everywhere; and gorged with crime, the weary populace sought in despair for the help that never seemed more distant.

"Pre-occupied with all things else, few took any notice of the unusual tides occurring upon and after the middle of June, nor marked the heavy meteoric shower of the nineteenth of that month. Were it not for an enormous star, mellow like a twin moon that blazed out in the Zenith of the midnight heavens, no comment would have been aroused. That some lone astronomer in less evil times would have cabled around the universe his warning, might have been, but now his voice remained unheeded or unheard. Yet, ere the sun had set on the succeeding evening, a terrified commotion filled the earth.

"Tidings of fearful portent from the Far East had

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

hurried westward on the wire. A clash of worlds impended. From far out in space, on our planetary plane, an immensity of matter, probably by internal explosion, had abandoned its orbit and was rushing with resistless speed toward the sun.

"Directly between it and its destination interposed our globe, and, with the crash would come destruction. No wonder then the peoples of the Earth, warned by the wire, stood still in terror. But what a little object in the infinite of the expanse this world of ours is, was quickly to be demonstrated.

"At midnight, Greenwich time, the ending of June the twentieth, the great threatening mass went flying by, avoiding us by going directly south or below our globe.

"The imminent collision we had been spared, but only by the narrow margin of a hundred thousand miles.

"None the less, the terrestrial influences were enormous.

"Sweeping across the ocean, vast mountains of water were piled up in gigantic tidal waves.

"One immense deluge, gathering in the antarctic regions and rounding the Cape, swung north and west across the Atlantic, and, with its crest a thousand feet in height, submerged the whole eastern coast of America. Then in its equal reaction it recoiled and again with more than railway speed recrossed the ocean, and laid for miles inland the low shores of Europe under its devastating waters.

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

"In the Pacific, a counter-balancing tidal disturbance brought similar destruction upon the populous seaports of China and Japan.

"In the Indian Ocean, a burden of foaming waters hurried by a northwest course across the equator, and dashed in fury on the Arabian and Abyssinian coast.

"Truly, the cities of the Nations fell.

"The attraction exerted by the huge mass of stellar matter, as it rushed in such close proximity past our globe, was stupendous. The whole surface of our world was shaken with earthquakes. The mountains parted and great islands emerged from the sea.

"The Mediterranean joined its blue waters to those of the Persian Gulf.

"The Geographical configuration of our earth surface was radically altered. In the seismic disturbances, our inland cities fell in ruins.

"Thousands whom the mob madness spared, the water and the earthquake overwhelmed.

"On the mountains of Israel upon that memorable evening, all communication with the trembling world outside cut off, the portents of the sky and excessive atmospheric disturbances at first found little notice. The shrieking shells, the dropping of rock rending explosives from the few airships undestroyed, gave plenty reason for the unusual color of the dying sun.

"But ere the evening bugles called to sleep, the hostile camps discerned that warfare of the elements more terrible, more awful than their own impended.

"At last the tempest broke upon them.

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

"With tornado speed, a mass of inky blackness, borne on the wings of the hurricane, swept in from the Persian Sea.

"The stars were wiped away as with a cloth. It was darkness that could be felt. Drawn by some enormous pressure from behind, the atmosphere from a sweltering humidity turned suddenly chill cold. In shuddering silence the puny millions cowered as the heavens set in array to join the battle; but not for long.

"As as a signal given, the sky burst into fire. The blazing lightning dashed its thousand glittering spears to the heart of quivering earth. Peal upon peal the echoing thunder rolled and laughed to mock the pigmy cannon of the angry nations.

"Men clutched the rocks in fear and trembling.

"Then with an equal suddenness the tempest ceased.

"Off through the mountains of Carmel it rolled its chariot wheels, while its yet fierce reverberations told of the rearguard action still in progress.

"The stars shone out again.

"But this was not the end. As after some crashing overture silence follows, and then the curtain rises on the play, so only for a moment shone the stars, then darkness.

"Close in the wake of the thunder, rushed the cyclone. From the south and east it drove, resistless in its frenzy. The water laden clouds had turned to ice, and the tornado, with its devastating hand curled its huge hailstones relentlessly and with the energy of

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

cannon balls against the stormswept writhing earth. The slaughter wrought by the omnipotent artillery of the elements was terrible.

"The unfortunate Russians, exposed upon the open plain, met the full fury of the icy cannonade; and when the hour of destruction had elapsed, not twenty in a thousand survived.

"More providential was the shelter of the Israelitish armies from the storm. The almost horizontal torrent of frozen death, withstood and warded off by the opposing mountains behind which they had crouched to escape the Russian shell, passed over them. But for the casualties from flying debris, the people were unharmed.

"On the morrow, in the hearts of the surviving antagonists, remained no further zeal for slaughter. In the horror of the event, aghast they sheathed their puny swords. Fearful and shuddering, the erstwhile enemies turned homeward and away from that mountain of decision, leaving to the fast gathering vultures their unburied dead.

CHAPTER VII.

As the red-handed slayer of his fellow creature, the lust of murder sated, the choking fire of passion turned to ashes, the evil spirit fled, surveys in trembling horror his butchered victim; even so man's inhumanity to man had reached its climax, and, in the presence of the great CATAclysm, the shuddering world beheld itself aright, and realized the truth.

On that twenty-second day of June, a new era of the ages dawned.

To the unscientific, the gradually shortening daylight seemed but the usual concomitant of the approaching autumnal season; but to the astronomer a strange confusion of stellar phenomena presented itself.

After laborious calculation it was in fact established beyond question that the polar obliquity of the globe was slowly diminishing, and that the earth was gradually assuming a polarity rectangular to the plane of its orbit.

At the time of the winter solstice, the equator had almost paralleled the planetary horizon. Scientists with grave apprehensions watched for and awaited developments.

The winter was unusual in its mildness. It might

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

almost be said that a continuing autumn passed into a long spring with no intervening coldness.

In the Northern States no snow fell.

As the anniversary of the great tidal disturbances approached, the world had reached a high tension of apprehension. It was not a scientific conundrum, it was a question of life and death,—of the future habitability of the globe.

Would the earth continue its slow gyration, or would it stop?

All precedent suggested the first dread possibility, and then within five years a completed quarter term would bring an arctic climate to the equator. From whence would come the enormous friction brake essential to check the once active and continuing energy?

It was apparent that when, eleven months previously, the enormous meteor close below the earth in its mad race to the sun had just grazed our globe, the mid-summer suspension of our sphere had presented the south pole in its furthest position of obliquity from the sun. Just as a billiard ball, swiftly passing will, almost without contact, give to its stationary fellow a spinning motion, so the rushing stellar mass, crossing at right angles the line of the earth's orbit had, by molecular or magnetic attraction, communicated to the south polar surface of our globe a gentle but positive rotation in the line of the meteor's course. This motion once established would in nature continue indefinitely, and, in the particular position of the earth, at the season of the summer solstice, such ant-

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

arctic motion sunward would tend to perpendicularize the polar line.

As the date of June twenty-second approached, it had been demonstrated that the enormous friction developed by the gradual subsidence of the great tidal waves induced by the passing of the stranger months before, had noticeably diminished the already very slow meridian rotation.

About the sixteenth, the watching astronomers were thrown into a state of perplexity on discovering that the tidal disturbances of the previous June were threatening a repetition of their actions.

Forewarned, the people fled from the sea shores and waited in ill-concealed alarm the outcome.

As the fated day began to dawn, the whole sky throughout the northern hemisphere poured down a continuous deluge of celestial fire. The meteoric debris, following in the wake of its huge forerunner was speeding by on its journey to the all consuming sun.

The explosion of the hapless planet had apparently shattered its northern hemisphere into myriad particles, while its southern half had remained almost intact.

This latter portion, its forward orbital motion arrested, had, owing to its greater size, first felt the solar attraction.

In the long procession, each part arranged in strict accordance with its size, the fragments journeyed sunward.

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

The primary upheaval had given these bits a northern inclination. Though, after the lapse of a twelvemonth, the meshes in the sieve of time were small, the quantity looked undiminished.

Close underneath, our earth seemed almost to stoop as it passed below the empyrean torrent. The meteoric dust that struck our arctic atmosphere burst into flame. All day and night the fiery ashes fell. In the morning the delicate instruments of the trained watchers told the people that their cause of dread had ceased.

The earth had regained its equilibrium.

The combined influence of the myriad passing particles exerted in a direction opposite to that of the precedent portion of the lost planet had just sufficed to restore stability.

A consequent as well as welcome result of the polar perpendicularity effected by the astronomic phenomena related, was that summer and winter had ceased to be. Day and night in equal measure came in succession. Life was an eternal spring. From the same limb depended the bright blossom and the full ripe fruit. A continuous mild climate with neither killing frost nor torrid heat gave ample scope for the scientific development of all the tropical and temperate fruits and flowers. A hitherto unknown luxuriance crowned vegetation. With food in plenty growing to the hand, the willing work of life became a pleasure, and needful exertion ceased to be a task. Such is the earthly and material environment of this present age.

CHAPTER VIII.

ABOUT the middle of the forenoon of the next day, as I was enjoying myself in a quiet stroll through the garden, Vera joined me.

"Ah, I have found you at last. Are you getting tired of your usual morning nap?"

I answered that I was feeling so strong and vigorous that I was contemplating a constitutional to the Rocky Mountains and back before dinner for an appetizer.

"Then you are really feeling strong again?"

"Strong! I never in my life, to my recollection, felt such a vitality and energy in my body; I feel as if I had eaten a whole ox, and had assimilated both his muscle and his structure."

"I am doubly glad to hear it. What say you to postponing for a few days your trip to the Rockies, and coming instead for a walk down to the Lake Shore?"

"Charmed to. When?"

"Now. Come along."

We passed through the gateless enclosure, turned to the left on reaching the smooth green highway, and set out at a brisk walk.

There was an exhilaration in the air that made my tendons vibrate with the nervous tension of a well

AFTER THE CATAclysm

strung violin, and, ere my manners checked me, the old time habit overcame me, and one of Sousa's long lost melodies came carolling from my whistling lips.

"Go on," she said.

I had stopped. It flashed over me,—that same two-step,—that fated night on the echoing concrete of old Rochester. When thirty years ago I had dropped the tune, mechanically at the very note I had now picked it up again.

The uncanny coincidence startled me, I remarked the odd circumstance to Vera.

"Then finish it."

When the last strain was ended, I paused for the applause.

"I never heard it before. It is beautiful, it is life and real motion. Let me hear another."

So whistling or maybe singing, we went our merry way, like children on a summer holiday.

I had become by this time fairly reconciled to my costume, though I had, until I saw the contrary, presumed that my companion's mantle was merely domestic apparel.

Yet after all, it is by comparison we judge. The beach and the ball-room have their own several standards, and it is not so much in what the garments are, but how they surpass in circumstance their own standard that they shock us.

So it was more with a self-conscious satisfaction with my own superlative redundancy of raiment than with consternation at what others lacked, that I

AFTER THE CATAclysm

observed the youths and maidens whom we met. These both were as a rule clad in a sleeveless tunic, caught in with a cord or belt, that fluttered to their knees like kilts, and waved a highland greeting to the sandals far below.

It was a simple outfit, and allowed completest freedom to the agile graceful bodies which it draped. Yet though it gave exposure to an abundance of fair olive skin, nothing immodest or objectionable seemed to have the faintest abode in either the costume or the demeanor of the wearers.

Another costume, in some respects even more simple than the former, in that it needed no shaping or cutting was simply a long, broad scarf, or strip of cloth several yards long. This was first thrown over the left shoulder and hung down the back to the knees. The front end was passed under the right arm, and around the hips and continuing several turns and then the end, carried down inside the windings fell to about the knees in front. Two or three buttons or toggles on each thigh caught the edges of material together to form a very primitive skirt. The cloth was a woollen, very finely woven substance, and seemed to me to be a knit, rather than a woven manufacture, but as fine a texture as could be desired. It was the yielding, compressible consistency that enabled one to bunch it over the shoulder without unsightliness, and, on the other hand to stretch it to its full width without undue diaphanousness. Only the caprice of the owner gave limit to the color, which

AFTER THE CATAclysm.

might vary from ivory white to the darkest purple, maroon or olive. It required quite an art to robe oneself with such a simple drapery and to bring the ends out even. And yet, after a little practice it seemed as easy as knotting a necktie. There was in the costume that they wore, no distinction either of sex or age. Mr. White's inclination was toward the tunic; Vera and I preferred the scarf drapery.

As this one and another passed us, singing as they went along and merely pausing for a salutation, I asked my companion the names.

"Oh, I don't know."

"They spoke to you?"

"Yes, of course, but I don't think that I ever saw them before."

The impression that the people gave me was of the country side in happiest humor on their way to see the circus. Perhaps through association, the thought was suggested to me by our meeting two huge dogs. I actually supposed, even when quite near them, that they were the ordinary brown bear native long ago to the locality, and was only undeceived when I saw Vera fearlessly patting their furry heads. They sniffed around me rather suspiciously, I must confess, and I did not enjoy the dubious twinkle of their little beady eyes, but at a word from Vera they walked away, satisfied apparently in their opinion of me.

The lane on each side the road was cultivated to the extent that it showed a rich growth of orchard and shrubbery, among which flowers were not forbidden.

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

I do not recall any plowed fields or any large expanse of grain.

There were no fences, but from this it did not follow that there were no definite boundaries between neighbors. Yet no demarkation line of weeds or unsightly trash was visible, a trifling thing, but yet an indication of good will and friendliness.

With my knowledge of the climate, and the absence of the tempest, cyclone or deluge that once accentuated the atmospheric changes and shifting seasons of the past, I could now understand how the frail summer-houses, mere rustic shelters for the night, would serve all the purposes that retirement or seclusion would demand.

An acre or so of land surrounded each dwelling; and while many homes showed evidences of excellent taste, I saw none to excel, though some approached, Vera's little paradise.

The ruins of the old city had been abandoned.

Vines and shrubbery held undisturbed possession of the crumbled stone heaps that marked the devastation of the great earthquake. The castellated splendor of State Street was no more, but the magnificent lawns bordering the ample avenue were still, in their present occupation a scene of beauty.

Keeping to the westward, and skirting the city, we continued toward the lake.

Charlotte and its desolate harbor had, under the hand of nature, taken on a guise that sent a touch of

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

sadness over me. The place resembled one vast ancient cemetery.

It was not strange that the absence of all industry, or rather of toil, should suggest a subject of conversation.

I remarked upon the lack of vehicles.

"You must remember," said Vera, "that not twenty years have elapsed since the cataclysm. The energy and strife, the boundless ambition of the rich, the ceaseless struggle for existence of the poor, there reached a climax, and when the morning of another era dawned, it was not further labor, it was rest that came.

How much of all the industry of your day tended to happiness? What purpose did all those mammoth productions serve? Then, those that had wealth built costly palaces, and filled them with ostentatious ornament. As shelter for the winter's cold and summer tempest, dwellings must necessarily be substantial. None the less, pride and emulation urged on the weary workers to gather about them vanities that often had their only value in their cost.

Even apart from the luxuries, so called, of the past, the struggle for their daily bread and for a shelter from the weather compelled continual labor. In how much of all this was real happiness? The railroads and ships carried from place to place the food, the fuel, and clothing of the world, the calls of business gave urgency to travelers.

Some favored ones, in search of pleasure or excite-

AFTER THE CATAclysm

ment, wandered about the globe, seeing and being seen. True, much of this was in pursuit of proper knowledge and in ministering to a worthy enjoyment of nature. But much was only to find new flavors for an appetite sated with all luxuries that wealth could buy. To them the value was the money cost. Compare the beauty of the lily with the glory of great Solomon; and then, against the dainty flower of the field, set up the barbarous gold and ornament which gratify the great, partly, perhaps, in that they dazzle the envious poor.

If the dictum of the Teacher is correct, how false must be the eye that sees nothing to be desired but in the sparkle of the lapidary's art. Yet it requires an unperverted taste and judgment to give to the gems of Paradise, that deck the verdant bosom of our Mother Earth, the rose and violet, a higher honor than to the flashing diamond. The verdict differs in that wisdom and vanity have contrary standards.

Eliminate pride and necessity, and, what is left?

Given a constant climate such as now, food from the trees, provided by nature, and always waiting to be plucked, and free to all that choose to take it, garments which serve rather to cover than to protect, then see how little is left.

The occupation of the merchantman, the carrier of grain and coal is gone. When consumption ceases, the factories must close.

With all this land about us, we choose a plot of ground, we build a little shelter from the infrequent

AFTER THE CATAclysm

rain, because we occupy it we possess it. That is our title."

We were sitting on a wooded slope that commanded a fair view of the blue waters of Ontario. The cloudless azure overhead, the steady and slow pulsing of the sleeping sea beyond, the fluttering bees and butterflies that danced in the fragrant sunshine, seemed like a dream of an enchanted Italy. Here might the wandering Grecians rest as amid the palms and lotus, ne'er to return to Argos or the Islands of the Ægean.

From the branches swinging over us, offering their unforbidden fruit, we accepted our midday meal, eating and chatting, at least for me, in thorough contentment with the present.

Merely to rest and indolently gaze upon the picture spread before us was happiness. No morrow at the desk or workshop thrust its unwelcome visage in between us and the comfort of the moment. There was a luxury in such quiet contemplation of this peaceful harmony unmarred by any jarring note. Simply to be, to breathe that balmy air whose every inhalation seemed like a vitalizing fluid, was exquisite enjoyment.

The careless abandon of my companion, reclining on her elbow there beside me, laughing into my eyes as some remark of mine maybe amused her, or lazily tossing a little tuft of grass or flowers at her pretty toes or dimpled knee, suggested to me in a hazy way as from the distant past, a hint of impropriety in the situation.

Yet I must do myself the justice of admitting that

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

had my happy comrade been my sister, or some little child of five, she would have been no safer in my care. By a strange perversity of mind, it almost jarred my inner consciousness to realize the absolute purity of my thoughts toward the girl.

As my eyes looked rather into than upon the animated face before me, the different little incidents since we first met wandered through my brain, and then in their perplexing candor baffled my wisdom. The experience of my early days gave me no instruction.

"Vera, I want to ask you something, and yet I am afraid I may hurt your feelings."

"Do you want to hurt my feelings?"

"Far from it."

"Then you will not hurt them. What is it?"

"Vera, did your father know we were coming away out here all alone; I mean did he understand that we might be gone all day?"

"I think so. I told him not to expect us back before evening."

"Did he urge any objection, that is,—is it customary nowadays for people in your set to go off on an excursion like this by themselves. Just them two?"

"Didn't you in your time?"

"Well, toward the very late years we might take our wheels and go into the country for a few miles, but the old folks found it hard to get reconciled to modern ways."

"And what did you yourselves think?"

"That depends. Not every one is fitted for liberty."

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

But then again, not every one is controlled by restraint."

"Ah, now I am beginning to understand you. No, you have not hurt my feelings even a little bit. Perhaps, in its subtlest form your underlying motive is a rare compliment. But, do you know, you have positively contributed to my happiness."

"How so?"

"Has it occurred to you that you are to us as much a subject of curiosity, or, let me say interest, as probably this new environment is to yourself. You are a being of a past century projected into the New Age.

"When you awoke to consciousness only a week or so ago, you had not in the interim divested yourself of your past personality. To meet you was as if I had taken a long step backward over those intervening thirty years and been introduced to you in some parlor of old Rochester. Yes, I can somewhat comprehend just how the young men I might there meet would stare at me. This simple drapery,—I remember how you looked at me when you awoke from your two days' slumber, how you clutched at your own disordered covering, and may I beg your pardon when I tell you it was the first real sadness I have felt since long ago. I thought, as soon as I said it, you would misjudge my seeming flippancy about your sandals, and yet, the very words you thought might pain me have given me more pleasure than you may imagine."

"Truly I am glad to hear it, but how?"

"Well, candidly, suppose we take the step back-

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

ward into, let us say 1899. On such a little excursion as this you meet some simple, pretty country girl, and, or rather this is what I mean, do you not see a different mental attitude to-day in you from what you would expect in 1899? Why those proprieties that circumscribed the actions and intercourse of those times except as restraints to hold in check the weaknesses of nature?"

"But then some of us——"

"No, no! I find no fault with individuals as such. The pine is readily shaped, is soft and yielding, will break beneath a trifling strain. But it is not in the mouth of the oak to boast itself in its greater hardness and endurance. Each is as nature made them and subject to the variations of environment. Perhaps this will not in full apply to man as in his fallen state he cannot ascribe his wickedness and weakness to his Creator, but at all events, it is not for us who are free from temptation to stand in judgment over those surrounded with evil allurements. No, my heart would sooner go out in pity and compassion for groaning humanity groping in blindness for the light, or turning in awful folly to a happiness that is but gilded misery. Then, even a little child had some of selfishness."

"A child! there you have struck the keynote. Did you ask me to describe myself to-day, I would say that as I look at you, as I look at myself, us two, I see you as a little child and me as her comrade. What more faultlessly angelic than the abandon of a perfect

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

innocence? What purer than the nakedness of infancy? But there the fact comes in that puzzles me. If what I have come through had been a resurrection, and a body just awakened from the sleep of death, I could comprehend the possibility of a different nature."

"No, it certainly is not the Resurrection, though it seems strangely like it. You have waked up, too, out of a long sleep, but that does not reach the difficulty. When you awoke you were even as when you first lost consciousness. But since the awakening have you not progressed? There is where the answer to the riddle that interrogated myself when you first awoke is found. The people of the past thirty years went through the chastening of a bitter darkness before their new and better morning dawned. For you, that experience was eliminated. Would we in you find a being out of harmony with ourselves, or would you become conformed to our situation? That is the enigma, and to-day the solution is confirmed. But in justice to myself, don't accuse me of precipitating this to your peculiar, but to me perfectly proper situation, in order to force or anticipate its mystery, and so gratify an impatient curiosity."

"Still, to me the mystery remains."

"When you recall your infancy and compare it with your manhood, what constitutes the difference in moral state? You have acquired a knowledge of evil; unfortunately, you have also developed a tendency to evil. The inherent weakness as well as wickedness of the flesh conspire with the temptations from the

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

Wicked One directly or through your companions, to compel you to acts of evil. And yet your truer self, the remnant of that Lost Inheritance, even then has for some fleeting moments revolted against the burden of false allurements that weighed you down. You recalled that assertion of the better nature, conscience. And when you did evil, has not that better nature sometimes afterward lashed you for your folly; and yet, in spite of all, you turned to it again?"

"In the past, a few, whom probably you mocked as enthusiasts or fanatics, toiled to stem the tide, but with such small success as you remember. Righteousness, bleeding and crushed, would lie unburied in your streets, while vice rejoiced. So much was that a common thing, the unnatural in a good creation the usual, that, when the order of the universe is now restored, you account these rather than the disjointed times, the miracle.

"You remember as my father has told you, when the day dawned after that last shudder of a final earthquake, the people had found truth. Evil was then grasped and held by the Almighty with a strong hand, and the Eternal Pity wrought compassionately. If now, in the Restoration, we wish to walk aright, the highway is prepared and the stones are gathered up. The temptation to do evil, the false allurements are destroyed. Given the desire for good, the having is secure. Don't suppose but that there are some, a minority, remaining who still are bad. Some, perhaps, may never mend; but, however they may be at

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

liberty to injure themselves, they can do no harm to their fellows. With all other evii, they are under the restraint, and when with fullest time and opportunity they persist in evil, their sure end will be utter destruction. Even the wild beasts of the forests are under the same control. But as to those who will be awakened out of the sleep of death, the same yet changed to what fundamentally now are we, what of their progression? Your problem is in a measure theirs; can the abundance of present good absorb their residuum of evil; or of you, who awoke but from a trance, escaping the chastening of the great Tribulation, and in a measure their prototype, what stripes were in store for you; how could we help or lead you, how would you adjust yourself to this new environment? I was afraid,—I did not know,—but as I, with some trembling I confess, watched you and noted your changing differences; Oh, I am so glad! so glad!"

And then we started on our homeward journey.

Like little children, or like some elder brother from the war just home, there with an only sister, hand in hand we retraced our steps. The shadow of a great mist had lifted from off me, and in the brighter sunshine of a loftier light, music as from the morning songbirds filled my unburdened heart.

CHAPTER IX.

I WAS surprised to notice that although our walk had covered twenty miles, I did not feel the least bit weary on my return shortly before tea-time.

Mr. White met us as we came up the lawn.

"You have been seeing the country?"

"Yes, looking over the landmarks."

"I think," pursued Mr. White, "you expressed some curiosity regarding our present flying machines. If you have nothing better in hand, would you care to come down to the post office and we probably will catch the evening aero delivering the mail?"

Of course, I would be only too glad to go. Vera excused herself as I thanked her for her good company, and we, Mr. White and I, started up the road in the direction opposite to that his daughter and I had taken in the morning.

We reached our destination, a little country post office much on the old familiar type, with a good ten minutes to spare.

"You will understand, my friend, that during the past few years of the regeneration we have had many things to do. The tangled confusion of affairs called for the first attention. As there were no masters,

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

there were no servants. With no approaching winter demanding haste, each one took things leisurely.

"The food problem had been solved by the spontaneous and abundant provision of Nature. The devastation was so widespread that little choice of locality remained. Of course, for grain crops a level field would be in demand, but with an orchard, or for vines or bushes, a hillside was as good as meadow.

"Each one took what he felt he needed, and so laid out his lot as not to interfere with his neighbor's rights. There was land in abundance for all. No one appropriated more than personally he could reasonably use. He could not hire men to work his land, for when there were no needy ones, wages had no attractions. What would money buy? Food? Food could be had for the plucking. Raiment? This the community had early taken in hand, and what was needed could be procured for the asking, or by the few days' labor at the common looms, and with our simple garments that was a simple want. A dwelling? Any little booth would serve the purpose, and the erection of a larger house was but the pleasurable labor that gives exercise and lends interest to living.

"The Public Services were not re-organized for fully five years after the Cataclysm. In fact, each individual was so intent upon the home affairs that touched himself and family, or little group of neighbors, that no one seemed to realize the want of any National establishments. Even now, the postal service has

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

small patronage, the mere carriage of correspondence between relatives and friends."

Just then, skimming over a low hill-top about a mile away, and perhaps an hundred and fifty feet above the ground, Mr. White pointed out to me the mail courier.

I had been looking with some expectation away up in the clouds, trying in vain to resolve an imaginary dot or distant bird into a flying-machine. So I was a good deal surprised to see the reality in the direction indicated.

It was not what I expected. I had fancied I might see a huge elongated balloon someway or other propelled, or maybe a great expanse of horizontal canvas, a big aeroplane, perhaps a double or a triple decker slicing the clouds as it swooped down from the heavens.

Instead, as this dragon-fly thing approached, decidedly with swiftness, the view from front showed the line of an isosceles triangle inverted, its apex a very obtuse angle. Its spread was about twenty feet, and from this base or cross-tie to the lower angle was I should judge, six feet. In the mathematical centre of this triangle was a spindle, on the forward tip of which two tandem fans or propellers whirled in opposite directions.

Suspended below was a light, square-framed cage in which the driver sat.

I had no time for further observation before the machine, keeping its speed close to the ground, was almost on us, and then I saw the driver with some

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

effort strongly press the lever down. The result was that a level sail or plane hinged at its front edge to the upper cross-tie, took an angle of some thirty degrees out of the horizontal, pointing forward and up, and the machine with a little tilt and rise, checked itself quickly, and gracefully settled to the ground. The wide rimmed wheels at the extremity of four elastic shafts pointing forward and aft like the extended legs of a galloping horse, took up the small remaining motion, and, the propellers stopped, the thing was at a standstill within twenty feet of the spot where it had alighted.

I now had a very welcome opportunity for examining the affair.

The driver, an intelligent and agreeable young fellow of about twenty, while he waited the postmaster's pleasure, undertook to explain to me the mechanical construction of the machine.

Built above the narrow oblong cage intended for the driver were a succession of light metal triangles shaped as I described, and stayed with cross-wires. Their lower angles were in a line so as to form a prismatic framework, its ends inverted isosceles triangles and its three sides rectangles about ten feet long. The under surface of the sides (except a strip about two feet wide adjacent the central bottom edge) was covered with a thin hard material like celluloid, and, over against this veneering, the inner sides of the ribs, to avoid unnecessary friction, were sealed with oiled cotton or silk. The first triangle frames graduated

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

larger and their lower angle more acute, with the result that the upper forward points had a very jaunty little upward tilt. A stiffened sail or mat about ten feet square occupied the middle of the rectangular level or top of the prism.

When the aero was in motion, this latter plane had sustaining power, but its special use was to check the forward motion of the machine, and give it ease in alighting.

In its flight I had not observed the, to me, extraordinary length of what I have called the spindle which ran from front to rear through the mathematical middle of the triangular framework. This spindle was fully sixty feet long, three-quarters of it abaft and one-quarter of it forward the centre of the aeroplanes. On the stem, as before mentioned, were propellers. On the tail end were four thin surfaces about five feet long and about two feet wide, two horizontal and two perpendicular, set like the feathers of an arrow. These planes were further extended, but were flexible and moved sideways or up and down as a double rudder according to the desire of the steersman.

Probably to prevent vibration, as well as for further strength, this spindle was trussed with wire, and also was firmly affixed by braces to the prismic aeroplanes.

That part of the spindle inside the prism was swollen like a bulb, or of torpedo shape, and at its largest diameter measured about two feet through.

I could not see into it, but the driver told me that it was cellular inside like a honeycomb, and contained

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

compressed air at a pressure of about four hundred pounds.

This compressed air could be supplied either from the power houses, or as an auxiliary, a small cylinder of liquid air could be clamped on and utilized.

The driving machinery was very simple. The forward propeller was on a solid shaft that ran right through this bulb from end to end. For about eight feet of its length, inside the bulb, some fifty sets of little flat metal chisel teeth, two inches long, projected like successive rows of spokes from a hub, but all like small propeller blades, turned on a certain angle in one direction. Toward the stern, these blades were a little longer and had a shade less pitch than at the bow. They were in sets, and between each annular set was a clear space of about an inch.

The spindle of the other driving fan (this was a little larger and went somewhat slower than its fellow about two feet further forward) revolved on the same centre as the other, but its shaft was a tube which fitted closely on the shaft of the other. When this outer shaft or tube reached the interior of the bulb, it expanded into a larger diameter, forming a cylinder six inches through. From the inside of this cylinder, like spokes from a wheel rim, when the hub is removed, projected a multitude of these thin chisel blades, but with a pitch counter to those bristling from the inner shaft, and in sets to occupy the vacant rings. Collars and flanges on these two shafts took up all lateral motion, but allowed them both to revolve

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

freely. To start the power it was only necessary to open a throttle valve, and let the expanding air through the forward box into the front end of the contra-toothed cylinder. As this air under pressure forced its way to the external opening at the farther end, it drove the intervening little propellers to left or right, and sent the both shafts spinning in opposite directions.

As the compressed air in its reservoir would become somewhat exhausted, the throttle valve would be opened wider to compensate.

The little mail bag had now arrived and was put with the other trifling freight in a canvas saddle or jacket slung around the bulb.

We waited to see the machine start.

The driver (who also was captain, engineer, purser, postman and the crew) first gave the rear of the upper horizontal hinged plane a tilt of about ten degrees downward. Then his tiller turned the rudder tail to an opposite, but even more decided slant.

The spectators seemed to understand the coming manoeuvres and gave a clear right of way.

As the throttle opened, slowly the fan propellers began to swirl, then swifter, while the aero gently started forward acquiring speed at every yard, until at last from a slight elevation in the roadway it disdained the ground, and like a white winged bird with outstretched pinions on its native element, soared aloft and quickly floated far away from sight.

The first fact that occurred to me, and which I re-

AFTER THE CATAclysm

marked to Mr. White as we were walking homeward, was that, taking the machine all for all, there was not a single mechanical principle nor motive force that was not perfectly familiar to our inventors years before the beginning of the century.

"That is so."

"Well, how comes it that the flying machine then was not in use long before 1912?"

"There are two reasons. Leaving aside any theory to the effect that inventions, like other inspirations, are only given to mankind when on the Almighty's calender the time is ripe, and that the Ruler of the Universe removes the scales from someone's eyes and discloses, as its hour arrives, some combination maybe of simple principles common to the race for perhaps a thousand years, and which theory has been advanced to explain why two inventors, continents apart, honestly and without collusion discover or uncover the same idea at the same moment; leaving this theory aside, you will notice that, while machinists had the mechanical principles, they had not perfected in union the arts of balancing. I say, in union, because the several and separate ideas were well understood. The scientific possibilities of the aeroplane were thoroughly comprehended. The metal-pointed, feather-tipped arrow had made us Saxons victors in the far days of Crécy. When mechanics properly combined the arrow and the aero-plane, there was the flying machine. For years, it is true, the wings had been perfected, they forgot entirely the tail. Without the latter, the

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

aeroplane dived here and there—was uncontrollable.

"It was folly to attempt a canter through the clouds on such an unbroken Pegasus. Even with the weighted wings, the further mistake was made of suspending the burden and driving power like a keel instead of centering it.

"By putting the main weight and propellers in the middle between the planes, the air resistance or surface friction on the planes was always balanced on the centre of impact and propulsion.

"A very light pendulum would serve to keep the airship on an even keel.

"Instead, with the balance not respected, an eddying gust or varying wind would continually increase or diminish the friction on the light aeroplanes, while the energy or inertia of the heavier parts suspended would not feel a corresponding start or stoppage, and the top-heavy, or rather top-light affair would lose its equilibrium. But, with the arrow centered within its sustaining wings, the solution was found.

"None the less, you might hand a perfect bicycle to a skilled mechanic; it would be one thing to understand its subtle principles, an altogether different thing to ride and master it.

"So with the air-cycle, only that with the latter a tumble or an accident meant death.

"Experiment thus was circumscribed. However, with the wireless telegraphy, a steering gear with valves like a pneumatic organ under compressed air was easily constructed. By his corresponding tiller

AFTER THE CATAclysm

safely fixed on mother earth the manager through his conjoining electric force could steer his model air-ship high above.

"After many failures, and much delicate material smashed to atoms, ultimately the proper proportions and right methods were discovered, and then, with heart of oak and triple brass, the first bold captain on the Ethereal Sea launched out, and the motor airship was in being."

"I notice, Mr. White, that you have not yet replaced the telegraph wires. Have you so little need for dispatch in these days of leisure, that you can dispense with an electric service? I don't think that I have noticed a single line anywhere?"

"Your mistake, my friend, is in supposing we need wires now at all. That is one of the few instances where an advance in invention decidedly favored the government. Marconi discovered that by diffusing the electric vibration into the atmosphere a sensitive instrument could be influenced many miles away. *

"The Roentgen ray revealed a co-relation between light and electricity, whereby the motion of light rays could be so intensified by electric power as to cause the actinic influence of light to penetrate several inches of opaque matter.

"It was not long until the reverse of this principle was worked out, namely, that electricity could be so intermeshed with the more subtle light waves as to

* NOTE. This chapter was written in 1900, just after Marconi's first unimproved wireless invention.

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

assume certain properties belonging to light. Among these was reflection of the electric rays. Reflection comprehended also the ability to focus or concentrate electric radiation by curved deflectors or lenses.

"It was found that the reason why Marconi's signaling from balloons or very high towers gave better results than from a lower level, was not so much because the magnetic influence travelled easier in the upper ether, as that the rotundity of the globe intruded between the terminal points, cutting the straight line of electric direction unless the transmitting and receiving points were sufficiently high.

"The next step was to perfect relay instruments at proper distances apart, to take up, augment by batteries, and automatically pass along as received, the travelling message."

"Possibly that tall mast at the Post Office has something to do with the affair?"

"Yes, if you examine those four black square boxes at the top, you may perhaps conclude that they are ordinary locomotive headlights, only that in place of the flame is a bristling copper, shaped like the spike flower of the Scotch thistle. Then the reflecting sides are made of highly polished vulcanized rubber, backed with pure zinc.

These are "senders" and they are turned, just as a search-light would be aimed, in the exact direction of the next office or relay instrument.

Above these reflectors and so out of their influence, you may have noticed trumpet-shaped "receivers" of

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

similar rubber, pointed horizontally in the course from which their ray is coming. Inside this bell mouth, at the far end, is a thin disc of flat copper.

The parabolic curve of the transmitter governs the concentration of the electric emanation. Concentration tends to economy of the force, but it is not always desirable to confine the rays too much. Several offices need to be served by the one diffusion, some in the same line, others a little to the right or left. The focus is accordingly made to suit, and embrace in its angle of influence all the interested offices.

At first a difficulty existed to individualize the telegrams so that each might get its own and no other message. But this trouble was finally surmounted.

Each office had its own musical tone, which, however, must not be in harmony with any other. Nor must the pitches be multiples or over-tones of each other. For instance, the pitch of M's office is 643 vibrations, that of Q is 710, and that of Z is 697.

Set in the wire between the receiver and the recorder is the vibrator. In the sender's office, in the wire between the transmitter and the radiator, is a vibrator which can be tuned quickly to any desired pitch. This the sender first adjusts to the exact note of the intended receiving office. Then putting his vibrator, as set, in motion, he opens his key and a long preliminary dash causes its prime or similarly pitched vibrator in the other office also to agitate. On this like oscillation a sufficiency of continuous current is given for a satisfactory telegraphy. The message, too,

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

is practically secret, as to steal it one must erect his instrument in the line of direction and also must know before hand to a vibration the arbitrary pitch. To tap a wire in the olden days was a much simpler job.

It was about 1904, when this system was perfected. The Telegraph Monopoly saw the peril to themselves of the invention, and as the successive patents were granted, bought them in order to prevent competition. Our Post-master General had also been awake, and had set his heart on making the telegraph system national, in common with the mail service. He took the Secretary of War into his confidence, and between them they concocted their plans of action.

It happened that the inventor of a successful field gun had sold his rights to the French Government, and the French, to prevent the other governments from using them had impudently patented them in Germany, England and the United States. Of course, on the ground of not putting the article on the market, the patent could be attacked, but all the same it afforded the desired excuse.

Our Secretary of War, on the pretence that he was after this foreign ordinance, got a measure through Congress to the effect that whenever the holder of any patent or an invention in the United States failed or neglected to put the patented article in the market, and give the general public an opportunity to purchase the same at fair prices, then the United States could at its option confiscate the patent, and itself manufacture as it chose the article, and develop the invention for

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

the benefit of the people, or for the advantage of the public services.

The Telegraph Monopoly was caught napping. Our government appropriated the wireless telegraphy patents.

As fast as the Post Office Department could manufacture the machines, system after system was installed, and the public were given a "twenty-five words for a nickel" service. Of course, big lawsuits followed and the Telegraph Combine did its best by competition and other methods not mentionable to hold their monopoly, but, for once, the government triumphed. The main reason for the victory was that the government intended and desired to win. And so it came about that their thousands of miles of wire were reduced to scrap and were left to rust in the ocean of watered stock of the great Telegraph Monopoly.

CHAPTER X.

VERA and Mr. White were both engaged in the afternoon of next day, and so I started out by myself to see what I could discover.

The general locality I fairly understood, but I felt that the present roads were new to me, the old landmarks lost, and the possibility of losing myself was certainly existant. I announced my intention to Vera, and at the same time cautioned her not to lock me out if I failed to return before dark. As there was nothing stronger than a curtain to close any doorway in the house, my absolute and forcible exclusion was not very probable, but if I were delayed, my friends might be disturbed at my absence.

"No, I hope to be in by supper-time, but possibly I may go astray, so don't worry about me."

"That will be all right! we won't worry. If you miss your way and night overtakes you, step in at any house near you, tell them you need the kindness of their hospitality, and, I assure you, they will consider it a real pleasure to shelter you as long as you may care to stay. Don't for a moment deem yourself an intruder, you will be sincerely welcomed. If you are hungry, pick from the trees by the roadside what you wish, it is yours. If you are not home by nightfall,

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

if you go astray, if anything that entertains you keeps you, don't let any supposition of our anxiety mar your pleasure, you will be back to-morrow."

When I first thought to go for a stroll, I had not the least intention of going very far, and it was only superlative caution that led me to mention to Vera the possibility of my being belated. But, as I sauntered up the road and past the Post Office, the idea began to grow on me that it might be interesting to put into execution Vera's unintended suggestion, and investigate Rochester suburbs by starlight.

All the same as it was not yet three o'clock, there were still some hours of daylight, and plenty of time for repentance and to rescind the resolution should I think better of it.

I had learned enough in my walk with Vera, to return the greetings of the strangers I met.

In fact, I so far had grown up and through the clay-cold conventionalities of the old civilization as to look upon a formal introduction as totally unnecessary, and to take for granted a willingness to reciprocate in kindness. It was thus without hesitation that I applied for any desired information to any one I chanced to accost.

The uniform courtesy and consideration I experienced, I still recall with distinct pleasure.

Sometimes I would overtake or be overtaken by a fellow traveller, but though I was a perfect stranger, I was treated with cordiality and in a manner totally lacking offishness or suspicion.

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

To a few whom I met, my history was to some extent familiar and these manifested a great interest in me. Still, they showed no disposition to be curious or inquisitive, and their few and polite questions were so expressed as to be neither distasteful nor unwarranted by the dictates of best breeding. But it was not so much their politeness as their hearty concern for my own comfort, that impressed me.

I must have traveled nine or ten miles from home, and was balancing in my mind the question of a return, or a continuance of my journey, when three young ladies overtook me. I was going to speak of them as girls, for they had the vigor and freshness, the buoyancy and spirit of a lass of sixteen, yet their growth and figure betokened over twenty. All three were decidedly handsome, and with a grace and style that would demand more than a passing look in the swellest ball-room of old Rochester.

I suppose that their absolute unconsciousness of my embarrassment at the situation, (for in spite of my boasting, I was decidedly taken aback at this wind-fall of loveliness) carried us all with surprising ease across the delicate first steps of acquaintanceship. But so it was, for ere we had gone many yards together, we had become like old companions.

Their way had a sort of cousinly comraderie about it, a natural and to be expected fellowship that robbed their pleasing sociability of any grating undertone induced by forwardness and ill-manners.

It is of no interest, the many things of which we

AFTER THE CATAclysm

talked, mainly of those trifles that pave the way to better acquaintanceship. But even concerning these to them commonplaces, I was so ignorant, and had in so many ways to guard and check myself to avoid some ridiculous mistake, that at least in sheer justice to my intelligence I made a clear confession of my inability to follow rationally some of their remarks, and told the whole reason.

"Then you are indeed a stranger."

"But you won't go back to Mr. White's this evening?"

"No, I don't think I will return till morning. This air is so pleasant, I will lie down later on, and sleep under some bush for the night."

"Bush! Nothing of the sort, you will sleep with
me."

"Yes, come along, we are going just over yonder to the Archibalds to tea, and they will be glad to have the stranger from Mars."

"Can you dance?"

"Dance?" I replied, and certainly it was to me the most amusing question of all the many strange interrogations I had heard that day. "Why, I thought you were all good now, surely you don't dance?"

"But who said dancing was not good?"

"Is it good now?"

"Certainly, we all dance."

"Polkas, lancers, waltzes?"

"Yes."

"Then I am glad I came."

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

"Their momentary seriousness simmered into a smile. I was their willing prisoner. And so, as we went along we improved our acquaintanceship.

I had been on the point of relating a few of the ancient prejudices and objections urged in my day by many worthy people upon the inadvisability of dancing, but something restrained me.

We had now reached our destination.

The Archibald property was a little larger than the ordinary and more than usually wooded.

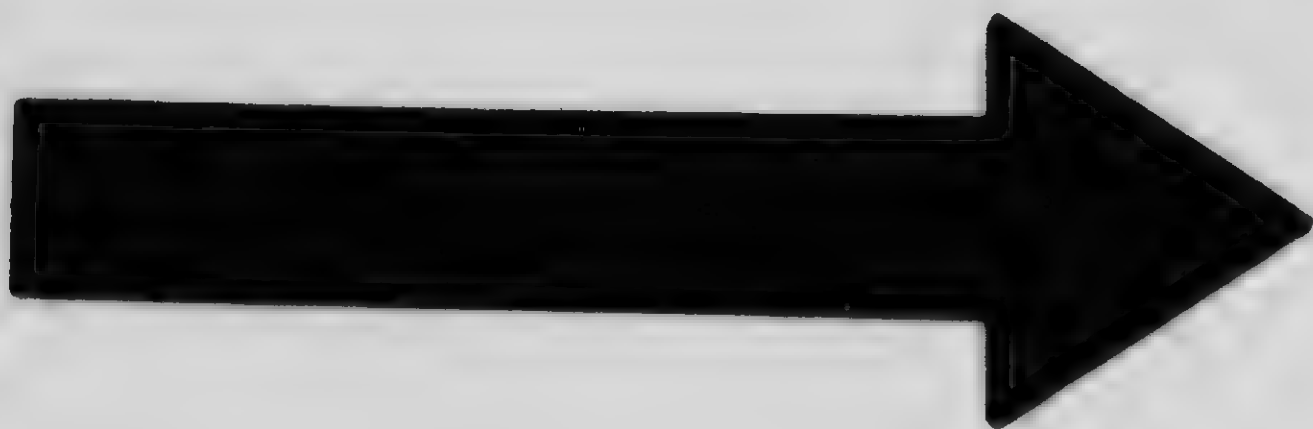
As we entered the grounds, we heard proceeding from a shed on our left, some hammering which might indicate that carpenters were at work.

The young ladies decided that it was a fit matter for investigation, and, with an air of familiarity which showed them perfectly at home on the premises, they followed up the sound until they discovered the authors.

The creators of the commotion were found to be the two young men of the family, amateur mechanics both, and busily intent upon the work before them.

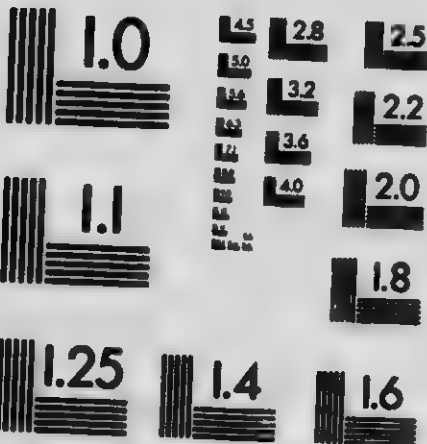
When I was formally introduced, the lads began enthusiastically to describe and explain the merits and purposes of their invention. That they were ingenious was evident, but that they were not thoroughly acquainted with all the contrivances in use in my time (it was a convenient phrase) was also apparent.

It did not at all hurt their feelings when I pointed out such of their ideas as had been anticipated, though it was only at their direct request that I did so and



MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART

(ANSI and ISO TEST CHART No. 2)



APPLIED IMAGE Inc

1653 East Main Street
Rochester, New York 14609 USA
(716) 482 - 0300 - Phone
(716) 288 - 5889 - Fax

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

explained the features of similarity. It was enough to them that the discovery was, on their part, original, and had their next neighbor forestalled them in every particular by inventions upon the same lines, I doubt if they would have bestowed on him worse than congratulations.

This entire absence of envy I exceedingly admired in the fellows, and when on a still severer test of friendliness, I pointed out, under persuasion, some further improvements somewhat diminishing the value of their own ideas, they accepted it all in good part, assuredly exhibiting a spirit that certified them of the brotherhood.

This incident accentuated a fact I had both before and after this occasion noticed, namely, that among all the people I met, I found, whether in work, games, or play, an utter and entire absence of rivalry, competition, envy, or striving for a selfish precedence.

As it was about tea-time, and as our intrusion upon the haunts of industry had called a halt to laborious deeds, we adjourned our chatter to the dwelling where I met the household assembled.

The elders, others of the family and a few neighbors made in all with ourselves, about fifteen at tea. It was a merry meal, myself in just as happy a mood as any of them.

It took the young ladies an exceptionally short time to dress for the ball. A re-adjustment of their hair, some magnificent roses, and a broad braided belt or

AFTER THE CATAclysm

girdle constituted about all the features additional to their afternoon toilet.

It was quite dark at half past seven, when we left the house.

I had such a hazy idea of the prospective entertainment, that I discreetly held my tongue, willing that the future should unfold its own programme.

We had gone down the road about half a mile, when, to our right, the lights glowing and the merry voices and echoing laughter clearly disclosed that yonder, amid a grove of second growth hardwood neatly kept, was the place we sought.

There was no show of gaudy paint, no turrets, nor Turkish towers, nor minarets obtruded themselves; no fluttering flags.

A perfect floor, about two hundred feet in length by one hundred broad, unbroken by a single pillar, but covered by a many gabled roof combining the Norwegian sharpness with the curving Swiss was there before us. Its unaffected simplicity was completely in taste with its sylvan setting.

The trussed interior was interlaced with a woven network of rustic arches, which quite concealed the massiveness of the necessary framing.

The side walls, between the upholding posts, were open to the air, with only a rustic railing to mark the margin. Delicate vines, and flowers of every hue had found their way above the railing, and hung in festooned splendor even from the topmost roof.

Suspended in profusion throughout the building, and

AFTER THE CATAclySM

scattered here and there among the trees, were dainty opal lights that gave to the conjoint panorama a brightness and a glow of fairy beauty.

There is something about a stranger that always marks him out as such, however large the gathering. But the only recognition I had of my singularity was that my friends left me neither time nor opportunity to realize the fact.

The short interval before the music struck up we spent in walking about and admiring the grounds and in making acquaintances.

My partner and guide, one of the three I had met a few hours before, and to be still more specific, the blackeyed damsel who had asked me if I could dance, undertook to do the honors for me, and gave to those to whom I was presented not so much a formal introduction as a little bit of brief biography. Of course, these were to but a few out of all those two hundred present, but, as naturally and without vanity, I may say I was to some extent an object of interest and conversation, I found afterward the basis of acquaintanceship already established when, without further ceremony I chanced to speak to others.

I must confess I was at first disappointed with the music.

That enchanting grove, where, from the boughs hung pearly star fruit pendants, or through which the lights like giant glow-worms lay in ambush for the shadows, that flower-doomed roof with floor beneath

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

like amber-glass, I had thought to hear a kingly orchestra and truly royal music.

I showed my ill-manners by remarking my disappointment.

There was a touch of sadness in my companion's face as she replied:—

"You forget we are only beginning yet."

"Ah."

And then I remembered that the professional, like other things of the former days, had passed away, that those who labored, worked for love and not for pay.

For amateurs the music certainly was fair. It lacked a certain finish in execution, but then it showed an intensity and movement that certified the players enamored of their art.

"I have done my entertainers an injustice and I want you to forget what I have said."

"You see," she continued, "they are just ourselves. The few who have learned to play, have brought such instruments as they possess. Some play while others dance. They take turn about. One of 'our carpenters,' I think, is playing with them now."

"Yes, I forgot. It seems but yesterday I had listened to our swell theatre orchestras, and in this lovely place, I thought nothing but Sousa's Band would fit the occasion."

"I know, I know, you didn't understand; but never mind, and yet, tell me, how would you improve it?"

"Do you want me to criticise it?"

"Criticism as a help is a favor."

AFTER THE CATAclysm

"Well then, in the first place, there is too much string in it. That solo violinist is certainly a very fine player, he is music to the heart's core, and, in a smaller room, he would be good, but this open place gives him a disadvantage. Nothing but reeds and brass will fill this space. It is practically outdoors with the surrounding trees to strengthen and hold up the smaller instruments. Playing from that central raised platform, and with all those vines about, the music has nothing behind to throw it, and much is lost too in the leafy roof above."

"Then you have played yourself?"

"Yes, I have done a little. I have played in and led a military band in the militia, once upon a time; still, of course, I suppose things are different now. But that music makes me wish I had my cornet back again."

"Was that what you played in the band?"

"Yes, they were once so foolish as to give me solo cornet."

"You never played a violin?"

"No, though I did a little on the flute."

"And if you had your cornet back again—?"

"I would try to coax the fellows to let me join the band."

"Wouldn't you rather dance?"

"No. Oh, well, turn about, but say, have you the entree to the orchestra balcony?"

"Now you want to run away from me."

"No. Now it's you that is cruel. I only want just

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

to look in, not that I suppose that they would take me on the strength."

"Well, come recruit."

This was between the dances.

About the centre of the building, on the north side, we found among the vines a narrow stair which led to the balcony above.

As we reached the upper step, we met a young man about to come down.

"Oh, Charlie," said my pilot, "we just wanted you. Are you busy?"

"Never."

"I have brought you an old bandsman of the last century—do you remember Vera White's friend?"

"Very glad to meet you. Won't you both come in and see us?"

"Do you know he has been criticising your music?"

"See how my sins have found me out. But, in revealing my ignorance, I have already endured my punishment."

"I am sure there are many things in our music that will justify criticism—and what did he say?"

"He said he wanted to join."

"Then join he shall."

"But Charlie, after he criticised your music;"

"Just the man we want," and without further ado, he reached out a hand to each of us and drew us into the gallery square.

"A bandsman of the last century."

"A bandmaster of the year '94," added my indorser.

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

"I certainly was given a cordial welcome, and before the next number struck up, was sworn a true and trusty kinsman of the order.

There was no instrument there that I could play. A violin or 'cello was not in my line, and, in any event not a scrap of music was visible.

It was time by now to warm the wax again, and I wanted to see them start.

They could all play by note, I understood, but, following the solo, each one took his part, and picked the harmony by ear.

It was a thing impossible to do with absolute correctness, to preserve the balance of the chords, and not to trespass upon another's note. I marvelled at the ear that they displayed, the almost intuition with which they judged the harmonies and musical progression all seemed alike to anticipate.

It is one thing to throw in a "second" to a familiar melody, a totally different task to create a score to embrace an orchestration of ten different instruments. Given such innate talent, training and the proper instruments and music would make a band to beat the world.

"Come, let us go down and finish this waltz."

"With pleasure."

The narrow stair descended, away we drifted on that glittering surface, borne on the pinions of the dreamy melody, away and among that multitude of joyous faces, eddies of happiness upon a sea of purest pleasure.

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

I must have been preoccupied, rudely so, for when we stopped a moment, I was rallied on my silence.

"I was thinking."

"Does it always affect you that way?"

"No, but I have a little scheme on hand."

"Open your palm then and let us see."

"I will think it over a little first, where will I see you and Charlie in the morning?"

"You will see me at breakfast if you will come home with me this evening and honor our roof with your company over night."

"I will be delighted to see you home, but—"

"There is no 'but,' and surely you would not leave me at the door step. Of course, you will stay with us, and my mother and sisters—to be sure you will. My mother would, I know, like to meet you, and then your scheme,—we will have that in the morning, and Charlie is less than a mile away. There is still a little of this waltz left, and I like your step. Do you notice how ours is a little longer and more sideways?"

"Yes, we used to call that the 'English glide.' My own has a touch of the shorter curved movement of the 'Boston' in it."

I met some very fine dancers on the floor that evening; they were all good dancers. They seemed to have an instinct of rhythmic motion in them that made their every movement responsive to the music. It was not so much that they knew the step. Simply they floated on the melody. When here it hovered as in hesitation, the indecision held them balanced with

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

an equal pause, or, else again, it caught them with a stronger grasp, and swung in swifter circles the pulsing feet that swept the floor. In truth, it was not that they walked or hopped, as books would teach the step, they danced,—as a bird soars in the sky, as a salmon in the stream, as creatures in their native elements, strong, lithesome, graceful, it was the acme of terrestrial motion.

Some of the figures and steps were new to me. They had abandoned the fancy additions to the lancers, and had returned to the old original.

One very pretty thing was a square with at least sixteen couples. It needed plenty of room, went to schottische music and was danced with the two movements of the militaire. It was so new to me that I failed to follow it fully. One figure somewhat resembled the 'grand square,' though it was in double couples instead of partners dividing. The 'half right and left across' with all joined hands and preserving their proper spaces and alignment was pretty to watch, but surprisingly difficult to execute.

The third figure, with a similarity to the old 'cart wheel,' was perhaps the most attractive, as the radiating couples instead of completing the circumference took the 'kick' step all circling to right two steps, then to left the same, twice; and then in 'partners to places' shot out from the centre in straight lines like the explosion of a rocket.

Another figure, somewhat the reverse of the third, I felt like naming the 'Union Jack' was danced from

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

the eight points, all crossing at the centre by all couples together. There was a suggestion of 'ladies chain' in the way approaching couples passed each other, the disengaged left hand of the gentlemen high in air, touching as they swung.

The neat execution of these spectacular dances would have done credit to Barnum and Bailey's "Nero;" and evidenced intelligence and inspiration, and incidentally, a good deal of practice.

I must admit that, attractive though the floor was, I spent fully a quarter of my time up with my friends in the orchestra. The view, too, from the balcony was very engaging.

Although the simplicity of the costume gave only a single color to each dancer, yet the various tints from purest dazzling white to deep maroon and purple, from the daintiest shades of cream and lavender to royal blue and gorgeous crimson made, as they intermingled, a kaleidoscopic panorama of eastern splendor.

I had just got back to my partner of the first dance, my chaperon and pilot, and we had just finished a swinging 'deux temps.'

Those couples strolling about the grounds came in. Now all were silent.

"This is the end," said my partner.

One note, the herald of a heavy chord, and as each voice took up the sound, with a grandeur that held me spell-bound, two hundred throats in song rang forth that wondrous music of the "Anthem of the Ages." Only an eight line verse; but while I may

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

describe the thrill, the effect, it had upon me, there is nothing in nineteenth century harmony to serve as parallel. The energy of the Russian Hymn, the sweetness of Schubert;—but it is impossible. We know the heat and brightness of the Sun, but who can paint His glory. So, too, there are things that, should we strive to drape them in our language, only consume our words, as molten iron turns to ashes the feeble cloth laid on to cover it.

CHAPTER XI.

It was many moments before Jean Blair and I walking home together broke the silence.

What her thoughts were I cannot divine; but the feeling that subdued my spirit was not so much an oppressive awe, such as some solemn music or event may produce as of a happiness that in its greatness seemed almost a burden.

As if a simple child had received some gift that over-spanned its every expectation or imagination, and stands spell-bound, dumb to the very thanks it owes the donor; so the pleasure of the evening culminating in that ecstatic song to the Great Giver of all Good Things, left me oblivious to all but my meritless condition, even to contain the overflowing measure of His Bounty.

A sound and dreamless sleep, and I awoke in the morning refreshed and without a bodily suggestion of my long walk or of my exertions of the evening.

Jean followed me out and joined me just after breakfast.

"And now, Sir Knight, has that plan sufficiently matured to warrant its disclosure?"

"How far is it from here to Mr. White's?"

"Homesick so soon?"

AFTER THE CATAclysm

"No, but they will expect me this morning, and I do not want them to be put to any anxiety on my account."

"Ten miles."

"Then I will make my apologies just now to your mother, walk down and report, and return shortly."

"You can telegraph 'all well.'"

"I have no money."

"Money? it does not need money to telegraph."

"No? But I must find out first from Mr. White some things."

"Perhaps we can obtain the information for you without so much trouble."

"I'm afraid not. I would like though first to see Charlie."

"And you are leaving me out of the secret?"

"Wait till I cook my cake. If it turns out all right you shall have a frosted slice."

"Very well; but I will have the satisfaction of helping to cook it by finding Charlie for you. Will we go now?"

"I am yours to obey."

It was not long till success rewarded our search.

I talked over my little plan with Charlie for some moments, while Miss Jean, with a well simulated pout, pretended to cool her dignity at a distance.

"Ready?"

"Coming; all through."

She heard Charlie's last words:—"I don't know where you can get them, but perhaps Mr. White can

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

help us. But, if you can manage it, old fellow, count on all of us."

"Thanks; I knew you would come into it!"

"And can't I come into it too?"

"If you're good."

"Are you off so soon?"

"Yes; I must go now to see Mr. White. May I have the pleasure of walking home first with you, Miss Jean?"

"Delighted."

Just as we went out of the yard, Charlie called out;—

"Why not get a ride down on the Aero? It stops just beyond Jean's house in about a half hour, and will alight you right at home."

"Is that another of the things that cost nothing?"

"Nothing costs anything. If any of the services can oblige you they count it a pleasure. They exist to contribute to people's happiness."

"Will you be back this evening?" asked Jean.

"I hardly know."

"Bring Vera with you."

"Shall I? Thank you; if she can make it convenient; after I see Mr. White you will hear from us."

We soon arrived at the Aero landing.

"How many passengers will it carry; Miss Jean?"

"About four, not including the driver."

When the Aero alighted, the driver proved to be the young man whose acquaintance I had made a few days previously. He was alone and seemed pleased to have company.

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

The seat assigned me was just in front of his own. It was explained to me that not more than two could ride in the lower cage. Additional weights or passengers were placed above, around the bulb or air chamber.

As the fans started to whirr, Jean called out to hold on tight.

I dared not let go to wave a parting salute and I am sure my desperate grip and set expression must have afforded some amusement to the bystanders.

As we gathered speed and took the leap into empty air, I held my breath and looked dizzily down through the grated flooring at the fields and bushes whizzing past.

However, my terror was but momentary.

The seasick, undulating motion I had anticipated was pleasantly absent. Instead, the feeling was that of riding in a well cushioned Pullman over a new steel rail on a perfect track. There was no sensation of a perilous suspension over some bottomless abyss. Perhaps it might recall crossing in a railway car a deep valley spanned by some lofty trestle; but the impression was that an invisible solid bore the Aero up and gave its transparent track as a safe and perfect surface along and upon which our vehicle sped forward.

The only disagreeable sensation was when we alighted; that little tilt and settling before we touched the ground; a feeling like in a quickly descending elevator.

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

As we gathered headway, the wind began to whistle past us like a hurricane; and for my comfort the driver pulled down the side panels of celluloid, or whatever the transparent material was, and also the panel behind us. This gave a clear view in front and protected us from the breeze. It also, resultantly, as the rear panel went into place, gave the Aero a slight dip downward; but this was quickly compensated by a movement of the horizontal rudder.

The journey lasted only about five minutes.

Thanking the driver for his kindness, I was soon at home again.

CHAPTER XII.

It was yet early in the forenoon when I reached home.

I soon found Mr. White, reading and comfortably seated in a big arm-chair in his usual retreat.

His back was to me as I entered, and so interested in the enjoyable book was he, that he did not notice my approach.

I had the ill manners to glance over his shoulder and see the subject of his study. The open page was at the last chapter of the Prophet Isaiah.

As I spoke he looked up.

"So you have brought the old Book through the fire?"

"Yes; history repeats itself:—*nec tamen consume-
batur.*"

"Well; I am glad to see it; and yet I must admit I was a poor student. As for the Old Testament, it was to me dryest of the dry."

"I believe you, my friend, that such was your feeling. But, did you ever see one of those 'lightning sketch' chalk drawings, made by some able character-artist? Here and there are lines, those short and zig-zag, others great swelling sweeps that cover the board from end to end.

AFTER THE CATAclysm

"The audience puzzles to anticipate the coming picture; the design is one vast hieroglyphic; when, presto! a mouth line here, and there, above, an eye, and behold, the portrait clear and understandable, complete. So with the Prophecies and, to some extent, the whole Book.

"But, since your day, many deep lines have been burnt into the page of history. Now, the wise begin to understand. With different mind we look differently into the things written. The 'eye' has been added, and soon, very soon, will come the 'mouth' the Word which will explain to the world this mighty portrait of Man. Perhaps, my friend, at our leisure we will read the Book together; and maybe it will interest you,—now."

"I really think it will, Mr. White; and I will appreciate the privilege. Are many copies to be had?"

"They can be got; and, no doubt, a great many thousands are to be obtained for the searching in the abandoned dwellings of the old towns and cities now forsaken."

"But they would belong to the owners?"

"Not necessarily. A thing abandoned voluntarily, with intention to release it, may be appropriated by the first one who chooses to convert it to his own use. The shops, warehouses and libraries over yonder are full of goods without an owner. They are as free to the taker as are the shells on the seashore. Much once worth hundreds of dollars has now no value sufficient to warrant the carrying away and the bur-

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

dening of the acquirer with the accumulation. What once was of value may now be worthless.

"Those very shells, yesterday the home, the life protection, of their molusk tenants, to-morrow may be empty and of no avail to anyone."

"Then, if one should now find use for any of those things, even as one finds use sometimes for shells, he may help himself?"

"Assuredly; if a book, a piece of machinery or tool, a plant or a piano; take it. There is no reason to suppose that you will cumber yourself with things around you which you cannot use; and, if you use the thing, you cause it to serve its purpose."

"I understand. Do you know where Vera is, Mr. White?"

"I think she is at the further end of her garden."

It did not take me long to find the young lady; a rose among the lilies.

"Welcome back. And where have you been, truant? Did you get lost, or were you stolen?"

I laughed.

"Ah! stolen; and Jean Blair is the criminal."

"How do you know?"

"Confess then; it is so?"

"Yes, it is so, at least to the extent that I am indebted to Jean Blair, principally, for an extremely pleasant excursion. But how do you know?"

"Jean telegraphed to me last evening that she had persuaded you to stay over night. Didn't you like her? And you had a good time?"

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

"Perfect; and so that explains your sorcery. Let me see you palm;—no, the other one."

Vera laughed as I scrutinized her outstretched open hand.

"You are going on a journey. Yes, we might as well sit down. Toward water. It will be about a day from now. You have three companions. One is a young man about twenty. I see also a dark young woman with handsome black eyes; also a fair man, tall, lightly built; and of an age that oscillates between thirty-five and seventy. This journey that I see is in the nature of a picnic and lasts about a day. It seems also like a search or prospecting party, but there is nothing to indicate the results achieved."

The expression on Vera's face was so comically curious, that I had to laugh. It was apparent that all this rigamarole of mine was wasted on the desert air.

Of the mysteries and occult sciences she was completely ignorant. My crude imitation of the chiro-mancer conveyed no suggestion to her of the genuine counterfeited.

Of course, she had heard of fortune-telling and palm-istry as she had beard of the oracle of Delphi, but the method and procedure was a new experience. She recognized the fact that I was endeavoring to mimic the soothsayer or forecast the coming event, and to that extent my act amused and was intelligible. The book of life, as written on the hand, I had once studied with some diligence; and, to find topic for conversation in that smooth and finely traced palm outstretched

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

in mine, struck me as a rather clever conceit on that bright forenoon.

"And now," she said, "let us bar the mystic, and explain this journey."

"What say you to a picnic, if convenient, 'tomorrow?'"

"I would like very much to explore parts of the city; possibly among the debris I could find my way. With Jean Blair and Charlie Silverthorn, we would make a party of four; and I would like very much to have Charlie with us."

"It would be splendid. Have you arranged with them about it?"

"No; I could not till I saw you. Now I must either go down to see them, or possibly we could send a message."

"A letter could be sent by the noon mail, and an answer might be expected in the evening."

"It seems to me that the Blair's place is over yonder, in which event, the city and here give us the other points of an equilateral triangle. We and they are about equally distant from the city. It might be more convenient for us all to meet there. What landmark could we decide upon for a rendezvous?"

"No trouble about that. Their road and ours join just outside the city."

"Can we all get there by eleven in the forenoon?"

"Easily."

"Then if the others can make it convenient, it is

AFTER THE CATAclysm

settled. Will you write Jean to come and bring Charlie along with her?"

"Very well."

By the evening mail came the reply that they would be delighted to join us at the place appointed, at the hour mentioned.

CHAPTER XIII.

On the morrow we set out, Vera and I, to meet, at the hour appointed, our friends at the rendezvous just outside old Rochester.

The short fragrant grass, all of a single dwarf species that made the highway one vast lawn, was like a velvet carpet underneath our sandals. The road-bed, so I understood, had been graded and then seeded down with this special grass; and once there rooted nothing else would invade the sod. With no wheeled vehicles to rut the track nor heavy rains to wash or gully, the perfect foot path was practically indestructible, for now very little rain fell; only the heavy midnight dew, with slight nightly showers at intervals of about a fortnight, when the moon was about half full, gave needed moisture to the plant growth.

Naturally our conversation drifted to the dance I had lately had the pleasure of attending. I recalled how in my day many people, good people, had objected strongly to such gatherings. Now, among even better people, not only was there no objection raised, but the pervading happiness of heart seemed to find natural and fitting outlet in what was once termed frivolity. I myself recognized the justice of some of the old time objections to certain amusements; that occa-

AFTER THE CATAclysm

sion was offered for questionable actions; and that rightly discountenanced. After all, was it not in us, rather than in the amusement that the evil existed?

I led up to the matter in indirect fashion. under certain circumstances these mixed gatherings were associated with improprieties, and so were

"Do you remember telling me, Vera, that the difference between now and the last century was that then, in my time as we will say, to do evil, (I don't mean the great sins of murder and the like, but I mean those many everyday things that may be simply dubious) had in it a certain pleasure and spice of enjoyment, while on the contrary true goodness was a constant striving and a toilsome fight; whereas now good has in itself an essential happiness, while misery dogs the steps of wickedness? Why this reversal of the nature of humanity?"

"I think my father would answer you in this wise. Where, even in your time, was the Kingdom of Great Babylon, or of Assyria, of Persia, of Greece, of Rome?"

"Perished."

"The mere fact of some monarch reigning now over these self-same territories, over subjects the lineal descendants of those old citizens of Nineveh or Macedonia does not of necessity work a continuation of the Empire of Cyrus or Alexander. A kingdom may be destroyed without the destruction of the people. The overturning of the ruler is what makes the difference. Were the whole world under one Prince; and he be

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

over-thrown and a new dynasty established, but over the self-same subjects, we might yet call it a new world, especially if the new power brought liberty instead of unhappiness to the citizens. Once long ago this old earth, which we are told "endureth forever," was visited by a Flood which destroyed all government, yes, and all the people, except those eight whom the Ark carried over. That was the first Age or Aeon, what the Apostle Peter called "the Old World" or "the world that then was."

"True, in the destruction of the first world at the flood all but eight of the antediluvians perished. Then came the "second heaven" when the world was heaved up or lifted up out of the waters and a new order of the ages began. During this period God left man largely to his own devices. The Prince of this Age was Satan. Christ would not buy, through doing homage to its Prince, the rulership of this world. Indeed he told Pilate his kingdom was not of this Age. But having redeemed the World from sin, which sin rendered it subservient to Satan the author of sin, the usurping Prince of this World was in due time cast out, and a people as joint heirs to rule with Christ having been by him gathered out of the World, the overcomers who in his strength came through great tribulations and trials; that World or Age the kingship of which Christ disclaimed came to an end in the great purging fires and fervent heat of the great Cataclysm of a few years ago, the very elements of authority and society being melted by the flames of anarchy

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

and trouble, and now is ushered in the "World to Come."

"This is the World in which we now are, the Sabbath after the long week of toil and groaning; the period of which the year of Jubilee was but a type; the day of rest and gladness; in this the morning of which all nature and humanity is moving forward to the final development of perfection.

"Then our actions are attuned to our environment."

"How do you mean?"

"What we once did in the time past might in itself be perfectly right and devoid of evil, provided we and our companions were devoid of evil; whereas, if the contrary condition existed, these actions might be means of temptation or bear the appearance of evil."

"Undoubtedly. For instance, in your day, among those that countenanced and indulged in dancing, certain restrictions were rightly observed. The better the people, the less artificial checks necessary. To the absolutely pure (who unfortunately did not then exist) all things would be pure.

"But as evil to a greater or less extent was everywhere present, every action was circumscribed by conditions. For instance, nothing in itself may be purer than a kiss. It may be defined as a manifestation of affection. And yet this method of salutation was restricted absolutely to those whose ties of relationship or prospective interest precluded the presumption of improper sentiment. In the general estimation a kiss otherwise was counted at best merely

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

the butterfly condition of an ugly grub. Now, it is an expression of that pure brotherly love, of that affection enjoined upon us as members of one great family, children of one Father.

"Then, too, purity as well maybe as shame, would compel the man or woman to hide from each other's eyes that most beautiful of all of God's creation, the human body. But now Shame has departed with her sister Sin. Now, this necessity of dress no longer governs, and though as a tribute to the weakness of the past, and for the sake of some few who have not yet progressed as far as could be desired, we still give our forms certain indifferent coverings; it may be that some day clothing will become a mere matter of adornment; but now we have not reached that stage. In fact, as I have told you, we are all of us developing."

"Then you think the future of this Age will be different from what is now?"

"Decidedly. We are only yet on the threshold of the present and advancing era. Each year witnesses an advance both in us and in nature. Even we cannot anticipate the possibilities twenty years from now."

"During the first few years of the new Order of Things, (I was only an infant then) an invisible yet more or less recognizable compulsion took hold of surviving humanity.

"This power has since gradually relaxed; until now, among most of us, it is almost unfelt, giving place to

AFTER THE CATAclysm

an inward and inherent desire on our own part to pursue an altruistic course."

"Yes," I answered, "I think I can myself testify to this same sweet compulsion, the mental and the moral uplift of my true inward spirit."

CHAPTER XIV.

WE had now reached our rendezvous and I looked about expecting to see Jean and Charlie.

Instead, a stranger approached us and informed us that our friends had wired him and wished him to convey the message, that Jean would be detained for about three hours on "Duties for the Community" which she had not anticipated; and would we call her up.

This we did, and arranged that as it was then no later than eleven in the forenoon, she and Charlie should meet us at the self-same spot at two in the afternoon, and that in the meantime Vera and I would do a little preliminary exploring on our own account.

Accordingly, with definite intention, I steered our course over the rubbish and obstructions and really dangerous tumuli till we reached what I thought was the place I sought.

The city was a heap of debris. No attempt apparently had been made to clear away the wreck. The earthquake followed presumably in some districts by fire, had utterly overthrown man's work; and the unchecked upgrowth of trees and vegetation had made the ruins almost unrecognizable.

From our point of vantage on a precarious heap of rusty iron and concrete, I was able at last to find

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

such certain semblance in spots to the street's tracery of the Rochester of yore as to feel satisfied as to my position. The narrow harbor of Charlotte was choked to a succession of ponds; and I thought I could outline the railway up from the Port to the City. To the southward was possibly State Street with a row of tall trees bordering level grounds, the latter dotted here and there with shapeless mounds, the sole remains of what were once magnificent mansions.

We ourselves apparently were now standing beside Main Street.

"Do you see that depression over yonder, a line running in that direction?"

Vera followed the direction of my pointing finger.

"Over by those three elms?"

"Yes. I think that is West Avenue. My home was there. No. 480. Follow that line a little, and then southward from those same elms; there, over to where that clear patch of grass is. I believe that is where the fire was—my last act in the grand finale of "the World that Was."

For perhaps an hour we followed our lesson in ancient geography; I, for a wonder, the teacher, not the pupil.

To Vera the recital seemed full of interest. It was as if some paleolithic cave dweller re-incarnated, had sat down upon some prehistoric tumulus and told of how his stone axe brethren had fought the mammoth pelegasauros or hunted the cave bear in the dense fern-growth forests.

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

Finally we determined to explore the ruin on which we were standing. It was decidedly a dangerous thing to do; as, covered by the thinnest carpet of green growth, cavernous depths might yawn below.

Tracing out protruding girders and joists of iron we finally concluded that the debris about us was that of a moderately lofty but yet narrow "skyscraper." It had fallen side ways, breaking in two in its descent; and so rested as a gothic arch over the top of an older fashioned brick building under it. The result was to form an excessively strong truss roof braced around the more modest shop once its neighbor, preserving it to a certain extent against the convulsive forces of the earthquake.

Through an upper window we let ourselves down into the third floor. The fourth and other higher stories were crushed out of shape; but from the third flight down, the place was in fair condition except for fallen plaster and a wreck of over-thrown merchandise.

In the dim light, one had the feeling a burglar or other interloper might entertain when he stealthily meanders through some silent mansion. At any moment, it seemed, the owner's challenge should rudely check our marauding fingers.

But it was "no man's land" in which we wandered. Costly pianos, instruments of wood and brass (for it seemed to be as I had planned and expected, a wholesale music store we were exploring) whole orchestras in fact, were ours for the taking; and what we left was no one's.

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

The law of abandonment worked a complete relinquishment; the law of personal and utilizing appropriation gave title.

I left Vera on the second floor examining with some interest the intricate mechanism of a smashed grand piano; while after a hurried search of what that flat contained I hurried down to the main shop.

There was method in my madness.

Rooting through the broken glass and dust and cobwebs in a shattered showcase, my search was at last rewarded.

With a cry of joy I drew from out the accumulated rubbish, a flute, a perfect silver flute, full keyed on the most up to date Albert System as I recalled it.

Imagine my supreme delight. In a delirium of joy (for was not now the one thing I longed for mine) I shook off the clinging dust, and with trembling fingers raised the precious instrument to my lips. Just as a thrilling A vibrated in the air there came a crash.

The precarious ceiling almost over my head was breaking; and, through the parting woodwork feet foremost shot the lithe body of my companion. As she fell, the sash-like end of her drapery caught in the splintered joist and held; and, unwinding, spun her white glistening body around like a top, her left arm held aloft grasping in her hand the dependent end of her raiment, and just one extended tip-toe resting on a massive table below.

It was, I say it in all modesty, a beautiful picture
Unconsciously, or rather unwittingly, she had as-

AFTER THE CATAclysm

sumed within the translucent aureole of enclounding dust the very poise and attitude of the famous bronze Bacchante.

For a moment, I say; and then, as the caught end of her garment broke its hold above, she quietly stood there before me and re-robed herself.

Few things will try the real and true purity of a friendship as such an accident as this. A mangled limb, disaster, a burn or trickling blood will hold the mind to the calamity and kill the baser thought. Or yet again, there is a height of heart affection, an compulsive love that leaves no room for evil.

I admit that I was startled when she fell. She was not hurt; that I realized almost in the same instant, still, as she stood there naked yet so serene, I realized that I should be shocked; yes scandalized, most blushing embarrassed. Yet, candidly I was not. My unqualified admiration was provokingly akin to amusement. I confess it. And then again recurred to me the thought, the words as she herself had spoken them:—"we are but little children."

I laughed, in part encouraged by my friend's calm countenance that showed in itself a trace of humor.

What would, in the days of old, have been a little tragedy, a something within our memory to cover with a veil, a something that again from time to time would send the unbidden color to our cheek, was this; and now, strange, as grotesquely small as if one showed a dangling shoe lace.

In the olden time, thus in black and white to relate

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

such an embarrassing incident, even to hoard up the memory of it among one's secret mental records, would be treason to true friendship. The only possibility would be absolutely to forget what could not be forgotten; to treat as a trifle of nothingness what alas was a huge disaster. And yet, now, here we stood, both of us laughing, not as two hardened criminals, but as it were two little children upon whom the ignorance of evil had not even impressed the first lesson of guilty silence.

It would appear that when the first ripples of my new found flute had startled Vera, she had stepped quickly backward, perhaps to hear the more distinctly; and, not noticing, or perhaps not realizing the frailty of the laths under the broken floor, the woodwork had given way beneath her, and she had crashed through, and got a fall of maybe fifteen feet. That she was not hurt was a wonder. Possibly the fact of her drapery catching as it did had saved her from a broken limb or worse. As I was congratulating her on her fortunate escape, I chanced to notice, about at her shoulder blade, a stain which seemed alarmingly like blood.

"You have hurt yourself after all. There surely is blood on your scarf (it wasn't much more) at your shoulder."

"O! that is nothing, it is only a trifle."

On my insisting, she allowed me to turn back the edge of her mantie to examine the scratch, and to my horror, there disclosed was a clear cut or tear fully three inches long and almost to the bone. It was

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

gaping open and dripping a few drops of blood, but otherwise the gashed sides were almost dry.

To my persuasion that we hurry home or to some surgeon to get the wound properly dressed, she only laughed and persisted that it was a mere trifle. There was nothing I could do. A roll of passe-partout which I found in a drawer in the stenographer's table, I first thought could be utilized as sticking plaster; but on examination it turned out that the sticker on it was valueless.

"Never mind, it does not pain me at all. What is that you have there? Was it on that you were playing?"

"Do you remember my flute of which I have often told you? This is one like it only better."

"Then play it. Play for me."

Nothing loath, I raised the somewhat tarnished and yet perfect instrument to my lips. A little fragment of "Martha;" then the thrilling vivacity of the "Mocking Bird;" one bit of melody after another followed. I was back again in my old "den" on West Avenue with the last glow of sunset fading into night. Songs of the twilight came again to me, and then as the last dying notes of "Home, Sweet Home" still lingered, I looked up at my companion.

Her eyes were moist and she caught her breath in the stillness.

"It was beautiful. That last melody, what is it? There is something pathetic in its sadness. Tell me about it."

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

Again on solid ground, returning to our rendezvous,
I told her the story of the man without a home who
sang its sweet praises.

"It is only the heart that moves the heart," was all
her comment.

CHAPTER XV.

WE had so timed ourselves that on reaching our place of meeting, Jean and Charlie had just arrived.

First from the trees near by we gathered sufficient food for our mid-day lunch; and then, lolling on the grass, I began to unfold my plans.

It was, after all, nothing very excitingly important; but the idea had grown on me as an inspiration from the dance.

I wanted to organize a full brass and reed orchestra, something on the basis of the big institutions of my own day.

Talent, time, and taste were available, the only thing I had thought impossible was the obtaining of instruments and music. But this latter problem the morning's prospecting had served; and so I explained it all in full to my companions.

As I hoped, they were enthusiastic.

The decision was to return to our music store at once and see if we could get a complete or at least sufficient outfit. We soon retraced our steps, and carefully crept into the building Vera and I had explored only an hour before.

It had once in my childhood been a matter of delight and surprise to me that the old castaway Crusoe,

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

the Swiss family Robinson, and the like, when in dire extremity always found the thing so necessary in a chest or wreck opportunely cast up by the sea after some very accommodating tempest.

Such also was our own good fortune.

In the Shipping Room, for so it seemed to be, were about a dozen cases, all addressed to a Rio Janeiro Band, and the freight boss' invoice on top of one of the boxes.

The outfit included some sixty-four pieces. With the exception of one instrument, the names were all familiar to me. It was a "clarion." The name was in a fashion old; and yet I adjudged it was really a new instrument.

My curiosity impelled me to open the box the invoice indicated. By a comparison of the instruments on the list I could see that this novelty must likely take a leading part, as otherwise the others named did not show sufficient solo. Further, it must take a cornet score.

This on investigation I found correct reasoning.

The instrument had the valves and bell of a cornet, but the brass of the bell had a covering of what resembled vulcanized rubber nearly half an inch thick, right back to the valve; and the mouth piece had a small reed peculiarly attached. This reed was much smaller than that of a clarionet.

As I was well acquainted with both the cornet and clarionet, I found very little trouble in getting a fair sound out of the instrument. My notes were crude

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

indeed, but accidentally I got a few tones fairly correct, somewhat resembling a cornet, but with more of the mellowness of the low notes of a clarinet or saxophone.

There were shelves upon shelves of what seemed like excellent band music, but we decided to take chances in the meantime on the assortment of music included in this intended Brazilian consignment.

Now that the instrument question was solved, it was determined to organize our orchestra, and then come over in mass to our grand "Crusoe's chest" and outfit.

It took but a few days to gather together our orchestra.

A nucleus already existed in the little band of musicians whom I had met at the dance. With sufficient added young men and women to make the full complement, we organized, distributed parts, and set out to collect the instruments.

The humdrum detail of practice and instruction is of no interest. Suffice to say the drudgery and repetition of scale and exercise which every musician must undergo to attain skill, technique and general efficiency were ours. No royal road to learning had yet been discovered. None the less, all the advantage that high intelligence, willingness, and marvellous memory give was ours. One thing though was noticeable, and this was that repetition of a theme did not nauseate; nor did music admittedly agreeable when new became stale and monotonous.

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

This fact so struck me, that one day I remarked it to Mr. White. I discovered it in the others, I realized it in myself.

Once when some operatic air or fetching song caught the popular ear, it was for a week or two on everyone's lips, sung or whistled; the newsboys had it, then the hurdy-gurdies; and at last every one wanted to consign it to the place of burning; until finally to hum a bar of it was to invite sudden death or grievous bodily harm.

"Yes," said Mr. White, "I agree with you as to the past and also with your statement of present condition. One main difference between music and noise is that the former, unlike the latter, is an orderly sequence of sound vibrations having a certain arithmetical co-relation. I have a supposition that if we could in some way efficiently plot out these relations, joining them with lines, the result would be figures and curves which as tracery, would also be pleasing to the eye.

"In music, the movement and undulations of the melody, and also the mental anticipation of the coming and pleasingly expected chord to follow are two phases of enjoyment.

"But to pulsate in certain nerve cells a definite succession of sound curves, and then again and again to indent the same nerve with identical tracerics, finally caused such a laceration as to become absolutely painful; unless (and here is where our present superiority lies), that nerve has such instantly recuperative

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

powers as to offer to each successive repetition what is practically a new or unscarified nerve surface.

"You will remember when Vera got home that evening from your reconnaissance of Rochester, and threw off a portion of her drapery, your surprise in finding that the tear in her shoulder was absolutely healed, merely a white scar left, and that in the morning even the scar was gone.

"Similar expedition in reconstructing nerve tissue gives opportunity for repetition of mental impression on unwearied, because on renovated sensory convolutions; and so what is to-day pleasing or engaging to the eye, the ear; the taste, continues to be so irrespective of recurrence.

"In other words—physical and mental perfection continuously so, means continuously perfect enjoyment of the once enjoyable; and contra, what is not primarily and positively disagreeable never becomes so by monotonous repetition.

Given, as we had to hand, ability equivalent to the genius of a born musician, in every one of our bandsmen, it is not surprising that in the course of a short time our big orchestra of sixty-four pieces was able to render high class music with magnificent effect.

Our first public performance had apparently been well advertised. At least a couple of thousand people gathered on a beautiful afternoon of one of those glorious days of perpetual June in a little grass carpeted hollow enclosed by a circle of forest; a perfect amphitheatre.

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

Until nearly sunset we played from our well chosen repertoire (thanks to some able musician of past days who had made selections) receiving enthusiastic encores in some cases of especially pleasing rendition. It was interesting to me to note the taste, the discrimination, the judgment of our audience.

The music that appealed to them was either an exceedingly simple theme of a sad or pathetic nature, some sweet love song or plantation melody; or else heavy involved harmony.

There seemed to be no middle ground.

Wagner's "Pilgrims' Chorus" and his wedding march in Lohengrin each got several repeats "by request."

At last the audience dispersed; the unanimous verdict pronouncing the Rochester Philharmonic a grand success.

The bandsmen, leaving their instruments stacked in a circle, disappeared among the assemblage to greet friends and acquaintances.

I was left to walk home with Mr. White who spoke very enthusiastically as well as flatteringly of our music.

I felt and acknowledged that there were among the rank and file many who were greatly my superiors in musical genius and real ability. My sole pre-eminence was practical experience. When they attained to that, I must take a very lowly place in the chorus; unless, as I inwardly hoped, I should myself progress and continue to develop. Not that I coveted the leadership;

AFter THE CATACLYSM

for we had almost come to a state when we might dispense with the leader; mutual intention and intermental cognition being sufficient to preserve unity of purpose.

It was about ten o'clock in the evening when I lay down to sleep. I was pleased with the work accomplished.

The kindly expressed congratulations I had received from so many friends as well as strangers had warmed my heart with happiness. Neither vanity nor pride found place, but rather a great content that I could be of even small service in giving others pleasure; and that their words had helped me realize their appreciation of my effort.

As I rested myself there on the border land of sleep, music, the music of the afternoon came back to me as if from dreamland. But yet not so, for nearer and nearer it came; and wide awake I listened.

It seemed to be away up overhead.

At last in the moonlight I made out a large speck in the sky slowly descending. There, at an altitude of about five hundred feet was a huge aerodrome slowly circling around me as a centre, and in it, apparently to serenade their beyond his merit appreciated bandmaster, were the now famous Rochester Orchestra.

Always playing with them, in the centre of the instruments, I had actually never before really heard them.

And this was their music. Suspended there in the

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

heavens above me; floating out on the still night air it seemed celestial.

Then as they slowly sailed away, the strains of Sebastian Davids' "Night in the Tropics" from "Christophe Columbe" orchestrated by Ripley with its luxuriously golden melody dying away in the distance, I fell asleep, and the dream-palms and lotus of the enchanted Land of Forgetfulness embowered me.

CHAPTER XVI.

It was well planned and beautifully executed, the appreciated serenade of last evening that my fellow bandsmen had so kindly given me.

The big aerodrome that had brought some of our audience to the Musical Festival (but which I had not been permitted to see) after returning its passengers, had been requisitioned by the Orchestra with intent to give me this agreeable surprise. Shortly afterwards I had the opportunity to inspect the huge machine.

In appearance, it was primarily three huge gas bags shaped like fish; sharp at both ends; not round, but oval shaped in cross section; and with the fish back a straight horizontal line, but the belly below sagged to extend like a fin keel.

In profile it was thus roughly an obtuse angled isosceles triangle with inverted apex.

This gas holder was not a yielding bag enclosed in a net; but was a tightly stretched skin covering an interior multiple trussed framing. Not only so. but this trussed interior was a honey comb of aeroplane cells so constructed that in case of accident to the gas balloons whereby their sustaining power was gone, a quick pull of reefing lines would strip off the skin in

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

sections and bind it in horizontal layers to the main structure; by the aid of which and the material assistance of the aeroplanes practically composing horizontal surfaces filling the interior trusses, the huge aerodrome would soar easily to the ground.

As already stated; there were three balloons or gas holders to each machine. Two of these were a little above the main cabin deck about eighty feet apart; and one was in the centre about thirty feet below the cross line of the upper pair.

These dromes, driven by powerful propellers, made an average speed of about forty miles per hour. A simple machine generating the lifting gas, a compound much more efficient than hydrogen, was placed in the interior of each balloon and operated by a slow combustion of certain conflicting chemicals.

Unfortunately my scientific education was so limited as to prevent me from understanding the detailed explanation as to the ingredients; sufficient to me from the practical standpoint that they were obtained with little trouble and in ample quantities.

The whole framework of these dromes was so substantially built, cross-stayed and trussed as to be reasonably rigid.

In ascending, it rose perpendicularly as a balloon, though the machine at rest on the earth had a fraction below the specific gravity of atmosphere. The actual uplift was accomplished by several helicoptic propellers, properly distributed, whirling in a horizontal plane, and needing very little force to overcome the

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

trifling preponderance of weight remaining after allowing for the powerful effort of the gas containers.

Some of these airships had several aeroplane surfaces, which, as soon as a fair speed was attained came into play and allowed the horizontal helicopter to be stopped.

In alighting, the forward motion was as near as possible checked, and the machine settled quietly down to the ground, head to the wind, and rested on twelve spirally flexible legs terminating with small broad tired wheels.

CHAPTER XVII.

It was a beautiful summer afternoon; but then the afternoons were all beautiful, and it was always summer. I had been idly lying on my elbow examining one by one and enjoying the many tints and colors of a bed of pansies in a far away corner of Vera's garden. Perhaps it was because I was softly whistling a scrap of old time opera, or perhaps because the velvet-like carpet of grass deadened her footfall, or both, for I was not aware of the owner's approach until she bent over me and kissed me. Then, seating herself opposite me on the turf, she asked me in what I was so interested.

"No; but it seemed to me that here with everything in nature so favorable, they might be grown much larger."

"The pansies are perfect in color and with all the fragrance of the violets. Still, I have seen in the gardens long ago, right here in Rochester, pansies as large and as pretty."

"Did you ever see any that were larger?" she asked.

"That would appear to be reasonable; but why was it that the old Rochester florists reached and could not pass a certain limit? I will tell you."

AFTER THE CATAclysm

"We have come to the conclusion that each thing in nature has a certain standard of perfection in size as well as in other respects. With man, there is a fixed dimension to perfect excellence, in stature, in mind, and in power. There have been in all ages 'freaks' that in one dimension perhaps went beyond the standard, but they were the result not of surpassing ability but of an abnormal growth. In some other relation they showed a corresponding weakness. In the lower kingdom and with animals that man had bred or trained, when the summit line was reached there came a decline. So far shalt thou go and no further, was the law.

"Yes," I interrupted. "I have seen that. I remember particularly, when we speak of plants, of the beautiful *Lillium Auratum*, the queen of the lilies. Florists produced it in a magnificent wax-like expansion of flower with golden yellow stamens. But as they pushed it to still grander expansion, such a weakness of root and plant was developed that it finally succumbed to disease, and any hopes of further advance had to be abandoned. I remember the same thing in regard to a famous herd of Jersey cattle. The stock was bred, and fed, and pampered until their attainments were almost beyond belief, they sold for a fabulous price; and then,—they all succumbed to tuberculosis. That was the end of the Jersey. So too in our last century also with man. They crowded into the cities. Some accomplished wonderful mental work; their achievements rank with anything the

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

world ever accomplished; but their brains burned out their bodies, and in a generation or two the family was extinct."

"On the other hand though," said Vera, "you do not allow for the imperfection then of humanity. What you call surpassing excellence was only perfect development; and the other attributes being much below perfection failed to give the support that an all round perfection would contribute. Now, we are tending toward that perfection under which every faculty will reach the limit of the standard coupled with a lack of weariness, as you know, that tends to a continuous enjoyment of that faculty to its ultimate."

"Then when you say tending toward, you consider you have not yet reached that limit, irrespective, I mean of such constant accretion of knowledge as comes from experience?"

"Oh, by no means. Why, we are merely beginning. We are in a transition stage as yet. In the first place, we are scattered and few. How many people think you are there now living on this earth? Not more than forty million; and at least half of those are and were English speaking. This globe as now constituted, and with its prodigality of food-growth, could sustain and lavish comfort on thousands of millions; in fact more than all that ever breathed since Creation. No, we are yet in a state of transition of development, toward perfection under invisible inward laws that practically compel advancement. My father told me yesterday that at the Conference of the Sen-

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

ators, of which Senate he is a member, it was felt that some new crisis is near at hand; but that, instead of being sudden and all concluding as has all along been supposed, it was now decided that the coming fulfilment would be gradual and in stages. This was all that he volunteered as I was passing through the room; and, seeing that he was engaged in earnest debate with three friends who had come quite a distance to discuss the question, I did not think it becoming for me to interrupt them. However, he will be glad to explain it all to us in detail this evening. And now, to go back to the pansies, what else about them?"

"Shall I tell you?"

"Why not."

"I can easily see why not. Is it impossible to unburden ourselves of things and desires impossible of fulfilment, or is it hope that hopes against hope that in some way the impossible can be accomplished? If I am unhappy, why should I not be silent? And then, why might I not speak out and be done of it? It is this. In spite of the knowledge of how welcome I am here, you know I am yet after all in one sense only a stranger; except to the extent, as you kindly insist, that you have adopted me. I am like a wandering star away from its natural orbit. I am lonesome. No, I don't want you to think for a moment that you are not kind to me; you, all I meet are the perfection of kindness to me. I know what I would like, and yet somehow I feel convinced it cannot be."

"But possibly it can. Tell me."

AFTER THE CATACLYSM

"Yes, I will tell you, only to be the more convinced that I am not mistaken. I will speak as if I were back again among my comrades of the olden days. If then, and with this environment and with these conditions, I would wish a little garden plot like this for my very own; and in it I would build my little cottage home, and ask you Vera to come and share it as my wife. Stop, for I know it can not be, the last at least; and, in a way, I feel it should not be, for Vera dear, you seem as if you were my sister, and even thus it can not be. And yet more, so much this sisterly relation seems now unchangeably established, I cannot even think ourselves in any other condition."

"True my dear brother, and my own heart acknowledges you my brother. As to your garden, which I know has but small part in what you say, take this, let half of mine be yours, which part your choice; and, if we wish to add, beyond is ours for the taking. And even so you will not go away; you are too dear to me that you should leave me; and if I judge you right, your heart tells you to stay;" and, as with misty eye and yet bravely—smiling, she bent over me and kissed my cheek, she added—

"BUT THEY WHICH SHALL BE ACCOUNTED WORTHY TO OBTAIN THAT WORLD * * * * NEITHER MARRY, NOR ARE GIVEN IN MARRIAGE * * * * BUT ARE AS THE ANGELS OF GOD IN THE HEAVENS."



